VISIONIAS
INSPIRING INNOVATION

ETHICS

Classroom Study Material 2026

June 2025 to April 2026

MAINS 365

AHMEDABAD | BENGALURU | BHOPAL | CHANDIGARH | DELHI | GUWAHATI | HYDERABAD | JAIPUR | JODHPUR | LUCKNOW | PRAYAGRAJ | PUNE | RANCHI

8468022022
9019066066

enquiry@visionias.in /c/VisionIASdelhi /visionias_upsc vision_ias /VisionIAS_UPSC www.visionias.in

“You are as strong as your Foundation”

FOUNDATION COURSE
GENERAL STUDIES
PRELIMS CUM MAINS

Approach is to build fundamental concepts and analytical ability in students to enable them to answer questions of Preliminary as well as Mains Exam

Live - online / Offline Classes

Scan the QR CODE *to* download **VISION IAS** app

- Includes Pre Foundation Classes in 2027, 2028 & 2029
- Includes comprehensive coverage of all the topics for all the four papers of GS Mains, GS Prelims & Essay
- Access to LIVE as well as Recorded Classes on your personal student platform Includes All India GS Mains, GS Prelims, CSAT & Essay Test Series
- Our Comprehensive Current Affairs classes of PT 365 and Mains 365

2027, 2028 & 2029

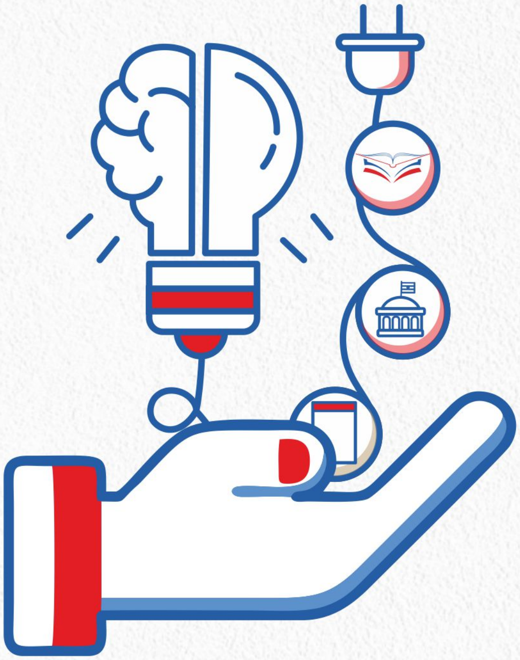
DELHI: 30 JUNE, 8 AM | 9 JULY, 11 AM | 16 JULY, 8 AM
22 JULY, 5 PM | 23 JULY, 11 AM | 24 JULY, 2 PM | 30 JULY, 8 PM

GTB NAGAR : 17 JULY, 6 PM | 19 JULY, 8 AM

AHMEDABAD: 15 JUNE | **BENGALURU: 20 JULY** | **BHOPAL: 2 JUNE** | **HYDERABAD: 13 JULY**

JAIPUR: 15 JULY | **JODHPUR: 15 MAY** | **LUCKNOW: 15 JULY** | **PUNE: 15 JULY**

OPTIONAL SUBJECT CLASSES 2027



- Geography
- Physics
- Philosophy
- Political Science and International Relations
- Sociology

Starts : **1 JULY**

- Anthropology
- History
- Public Administration

Starts : **15 JULY**

ETHICS

Table of Contents

1. KEY ETHICAL VALUES 5
1.1. Accountability 5
1.2. Leadership 5
1.3. Selflessness 6
1.4. Empathy 7
1.5. Probity 7
1.6. Honesty 8
1.7. Dedication to Public Service 9
1.8. Objectivity 9
1.9. Impartiality and Non-partisanship 10
1.10. Tolerance 11
1.11. Conscience 11
2. ETHICS IN GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION 13
2.1. Moral Integrity 13
2.2. Trust in Public Institutions 14
2.3. Public Infrastructure and Public Service Delivery 16
2.4. Ethics of Whistleblowing 17
2.5. Ethics and Politics: The Crisis of Democratic Ethics 19
2.6. Key Words 21
2.7. Practice Question 21
3. ETHICS AND SOCIETY 21
3.1. Right to Die with Dignity 22
3.2. Inclusive Growth 23
3.3. Ethics of Stray Dog Management 24
3.4. Instant Justice 25
3.5. Happiness 27
3.6. Integral Humanism (Ekatma Manavvad) 28
3.7. Key Words 29
3.8. Practice Question 29
4. ETHICS & BUSINESS 30
4.1. Ethics of Business Downsizing 30
4.2. Celebrities and Endorsement of Products 31
4.3. Conscious Capitalism 32
4.4. Key Words 34
4.5. Practice Question 34
5. ETHICS AND MEDIA 35
5.1. Social Media and Civil Servants 35
5.2. Obscenity on Digital Platforms 36
5.3. Media Ethics and Self-Regulation 38
5.4. Key Words 39
5.5. Practice Questions 39
6. ETHICS AND TECHNOLOGy 40
6.1. Artificial Intelligence (AI) & Ethics 40
6.1.1. National Security, AI & Ethics 41
6.1.2. Big Tech & AI: A Growing Regulatory Challenge 41
6.2. Ethics of Neuro-Tech Revolution 43
6.3. Emotional Intelligence in the Age of AI 44
6.4. Key Words 46
6.5. Practice Question 46
7. MISCELLANEOUS 47
7.1. Values of Mahatma Gandhi and Sree Narayan Guru 47
7.2. Contemporary Relevance of Bhagavad Gita 47
7.3. Ethics and Climate Change 48
7.4. Ethics of Global Governance 49
7.5. Ethics of War 50
7.6. Ethics of Capital Punishment 52
7.7. Ethics of Migration 54
7.8. Ethics of Doping in Sports 55
7.9. Key Words 56
7.10. Practice Question 57
8. TEST YOUR LEARNING 58
9. APPENDIX 71
9.1. Indian Moral Thinkers & Philosopher- Ethical Ideas/Values & Quotes 71

Copyright © by Vision IAS
All rights are reserved. No part of this document may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior permission of Vision IAS.

Preface

To the Aspirant Who Dares to Dream

The UPSC Civil Services Mains Examination is not merely a test of knowledge but a challenge of precision, clarity, and smart revision. Within the vast General Studies syllabus, the Ethics section remains a key determinant in boosting overall scores. Recognizing this, VISION IAS presents **Mains 365 – Ethics**, a meticulously curated document crafted as the ultimate revision companion.

More than just a current affairs compilation, it is a strategic tool aimed at enhancing answer quality, integrating current ethical issues with conceptual clarity, and securing those crucial extra marks that often determine final selection. Designed to be exam-centric, crisp, and insightful, this compilation enables quick yet comprehensive revision, even in the final days before the exam. **Mains 365 – Ethics** is your shortcut to smart preparation and a strategic edge in the examination hall.

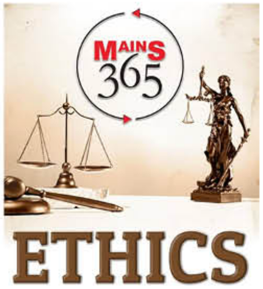
Let it be your trusted guide for clarity, for revision, and for success.

Q1. WHY 90% OF UPSC ASPIRANTS FAIL TO CRACK MAINS?

- **Scattered Information:** Jumping between multiple sources creates confusion.
- **Outdated Content:** Using materials that don't reflect current developments.
- **Lack of Integration:** Inability to connect static knowledge with current affairs.
- **Poor Answer Structure:** Not knowing how to present knowledge effectively.
- **Missing the UPSC Mindset:** Failing to understand what examiners actually want.

But what if you could overcome ALL these challenges with ONE comprehensive resource?

Q2. WHY MAINS 365 ETHICS?



- A one-stop annual compendium that distills major ethical debates into concise, exam-oriented notes—systematically mapped to the GS-IV syllabus of UPSC CSE Mains.
- The document enriches your preparation not just for GS-IV but also enhances essay writing by providing real-life civil servant examples and contemporary ethical dilemmas across 7 core areas including governance, society, business, media, and technology.

Q3. I ALREADY HAVE STATIC BOOKS. WHY DO I NEED THIS?

Static concepts in ethics gain value only when applied to real-life contexts. Mains 365 – Ethics bridges that gap by linking classic ethical theories (like Deontology and Utilitarianism) to recent issues—making your answers more relevant, analytical, and impactful.

Q4. WILL IT ACTUALLY SAVE MY TIME IN THE EXAM HALL?

Yes.

The document is built on visual and structural frameworks. Features like **Key Stakeholders and their Interests** tables, **Answer Canvas** outlines, comparative infographics, and specific **Key Words** act like visual flashcards. You recall a structured framework, not a bulky paragraph.

Concise and easily understandable definitions

1.10. TOLERANCE

- **Meaning**: It refers to fair, objective, and permissive attitude towards those whose opinions, practices, race religion, nationality, etc. are different from one's own.

Introduction

The Supreme Court, in **Harish Rana v. Union of India (March 2026)**, for the first time applied its passive euthanasia guidelines, highlighting the principle of **Right to Die with Dignity**.

Can be used as an introduction

The document provides a structured list of stakeholders and their interests, helping you develop a more nuanced and analytical approach to such questions.

Key Stakeholders And Their Interests	
Stakeholders	**Interests**
Terminally Ill Patients and Their Families	• **Patients:** Endure **severe pain**, emotional and **financial distress**. • **Families:** Struggle with **grief** and desire to **ease suffering**.
Healthcare Providers	• Bound by **Hippocratic Oath** to **alleviate suffering**, but face **moral dilemmas** between **autonomy** and preserving life.
Legislators and Policymakers	• Must **protect rights** and **prevent misuse** of the **Right to Die with Dignity**.
Society at large	• Balances **sanctity of life** with growing emphasis on **personal autonomy** and **dignity**.

Relevant quotes are provided at the end of each article to help you understand how to use them effectively for value addition in your answers.

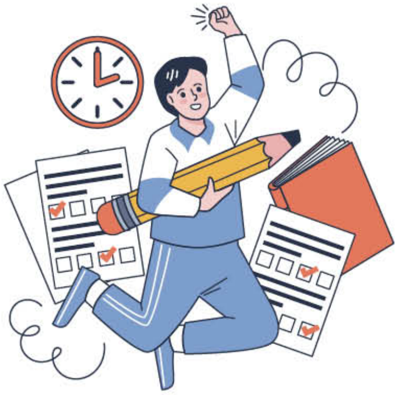
> With great power comes great responsibility.
>
> **-Voltaire**

Q5. WHAT GIVES MY ANSWERS EXTRA CREDIBILITY?

Ready-to-use ethical quotes (from thinkers like Gandhi, Rawls, and Socrates) and real-life **Values in Action** examples of leaders and civil servants (e.g., Ratan Tata, Satyendra Dubey, Jacinda Ardern) lend instant credibility. Examiners value ethical depth backed by precise references.

Q6. HOW IS IT STRUCTURED FOR THE 3-HOUR EXAMINATION?

Every sub-topic follows the golden sequence: **Introduction (context)** → **Key Stakeholders & Interests** → **Ethical Issues/Dilemmas** → **Way Forward**. So you can lift the framework, plug in your insights, and write at full speed while others are still outlining.



Q7. CAN YOU DEMONSTRATE WITH AN ACTUAL QUESTION?

As Artificial Intelligence and neurotechnology increasingly intersect with public administration, they raise profound ethical concerns regarding cognitive liberty, surveillance, and human rights. Discuss the ethical dilemmas involved and explain how Emotional Intelligence can aid public administrators in ensuring the responsible integration of these technologies.

Quick extract from Mains 365 - Ethics →

- **AI & Tech Risks:** Mass surveillance, embedded bias, algorithmic opaque-ness (black boxes).
- **Ethical Dilemmas:** Privacy vs. National Security, Utilitarianism vs. Rights-Based Ethics.
- **Role of EQ:** Fosters empathy, citizen-centric governance, and crisis management over mere efficiency.

Plug these into the provided Answer Canvas (Intro-Body-Conclusion):

- **Begin** by defining the profound ethical complexities of AI/neurotechnology (threats to privacy, cognitive liberty) and the immediate need for human governance.
- **Critically assess** the ethical dilemmas (data monopolies, surveillance) and explain how Emotional Intelligence empowers administrators to prioritize fundamental rights.
- **Conclude** that the true societal value of these technologies depends on integrating regulatory guardrails with enduring human virtues of empathy and accountability.

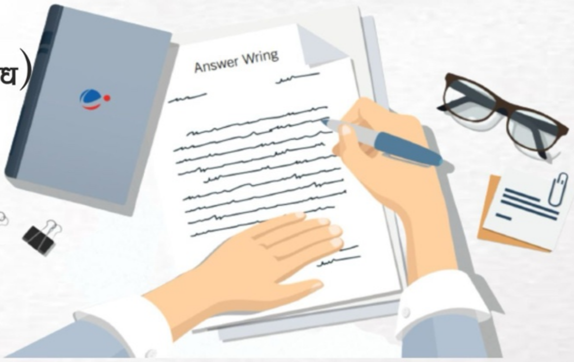
> *Result: A focused, enriched answer grounded in theory and contemporary ethical discourse—exactly what UPSC expects.*

Final Word

Think of Mains 365 as a ready answer bank. With the **Test Your Learning** section containing over 30 detailed case studies, the content is pre-curated; your job is just to pick, organise, and add your own insight!

ALL INDIA MAINS TEST SERIES

Get the Benefit of Innovative Assessment System from the leader in the Test Series Program



- **General Studies** (हिन्दी माध्यम में भी उपलब्ध)
- **Essay** (हिन्दी माध्यम में भी उपलब्ध)
- Ethics
- PSIR
- Anthropology
- Hindi literature
- History
- Geography
- Sociology

2026	ENGLISH MEDIUM 5 JULY	हिन्दी माध्यम 5 जुलाई
2027	ENGLISH MEDIUM 5 JULY	हिन्दी माध्यम 5 जुलाई

Scan QR code for instant personalized mentoring

1. KEY ETHICAL VALUES

1.1. ACCOUNTABILITY

Accountability

> *"However good a Constitution may be, if those who are implementing it are not good, it will prove to be bad."*
> ***- Dr. B.R. Ambedkar***

- **Meaning:** Accountability means making the public officials **answerable for their actions and choices** and **responsive to the entity** from which they derive their authority.
- **Different Forms of Accountability:**
  - **Vertical Accountability:** Principal-agent relationship, e.g., elections, where the voters (principals) hold the governments (agents) to account.
  - **Horizontal Accountability:** Exercised through a network of institutions, including both traditional mutual control among different branches of power (executive, legislature, and judiciary) and independent institutions.
  - **Social Accountability:** Control exercised by multiple civil society organizations and independent media on public sector officials.
- **Effectiveness of Accountability:**
  - Avoids conflict of interest by clearly demarcating area of one's actions.
  - Brings legitimacy to public services and motivates public servants to discharge their duty with honesty, integrity and efficiency.
- **Accountability and Responsibility:**
  - Responsibility implies accountability to oneself, i.e., where a person feels answerable to oneself for all his actions, even if it is not covered by any law.
  - Accountability requires a person to be liable and answerable for the things he/she does.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Accountability in action</th></tr>
<tr>
<td> Morarji Desai believed in the cut and thrust of debate as well as the freedom of the fourth estate – the media. He had regular press conferences where journalists were given full freedom to ask questions.</td>
<td> Lal Bahadur Shastri, when he served as the Railway Minister, tendered his resignation on two occasions of major railway accidents. Though not personally responsible for the accident, he took the moral responsibility and tendered his resignation.</td>
</tr>
</table>

1.2. LEADERSHIP

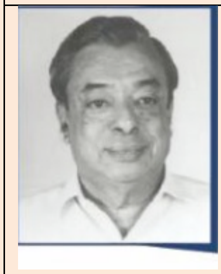
Leadership

> *"A leader is one who knows the way, goes the way, and shows the way"* ***-John C. Maxwell***

- **Meaning:** A person who **successfully marshals his collaborators** to achieve particular ends **is a leader**.
  - Leadership **stems from social influence**, rather than authority or power and it **includes a goal** with an intended outcome.
- **Effectiveness of Leadership:** Critical ingredient of good governance, improves participation of people in decision-making, ensures equal application of rule of law, and maintains transparency and accountability.

- Transformational leadership is a type of leadership in which leaders inspire and encourage their team/ followers to induce a positive change.

Effective Leadership in action



Dr. Verghese Kurien, regarded as the **father of India's White Revolution,** set up a successful cooperative **structure Amul**, where the organisation is not owned by an individual but by all producer members and they are stakeholders and decision-makers at every stage.

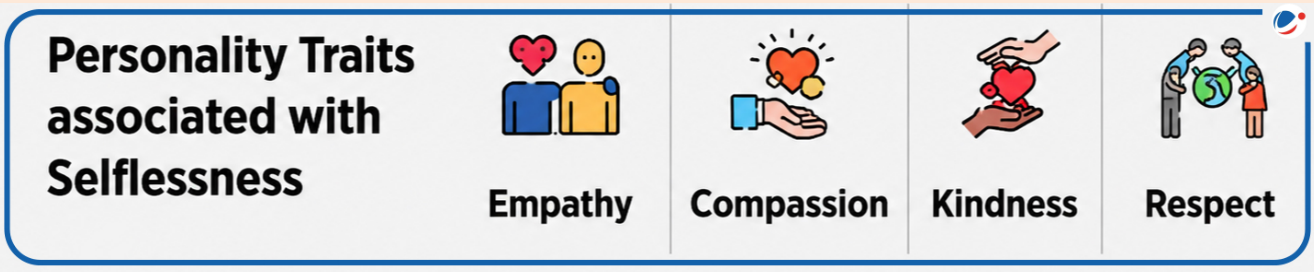
E. Sreedharan (popularly known as the **Metro Man of India)** whose attention to detail, commitment to timelines, and focus on quality have made him a symbol of effective project management and engineering leadership.

1.3. SELFLESSNESS

Selflessness

*"The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others." **- Mahatma Gandhi***

- **Meaning:** It is the tendency to give more consideration to others' needs than oneself. However, it doesn't mean that one is completely surrendering his/her needs.
    - In Governance, the idea of Selflessness means that those engaged in public roles **act solely in the public interest**. This means **placing the needs of the public ahead of their own personal needs** and progression.
- **Effectiveness of Selflessness**: It helps in **addressing the potential conflict between the benefit to the provider and the recipient of the public sector service**.


Personality Traits associated with Selflessness
Empathy
Compassion
Kindness
Respect

Selflessness in action

Satyendra Dubey, an Indian Engineering Service officer, working with the National Highways Authority of India exposed serious corruption in the Golden Quadrilateral Highway construction project due to which he lost his life too. This showcases his integrity and selflessness as a public servant.

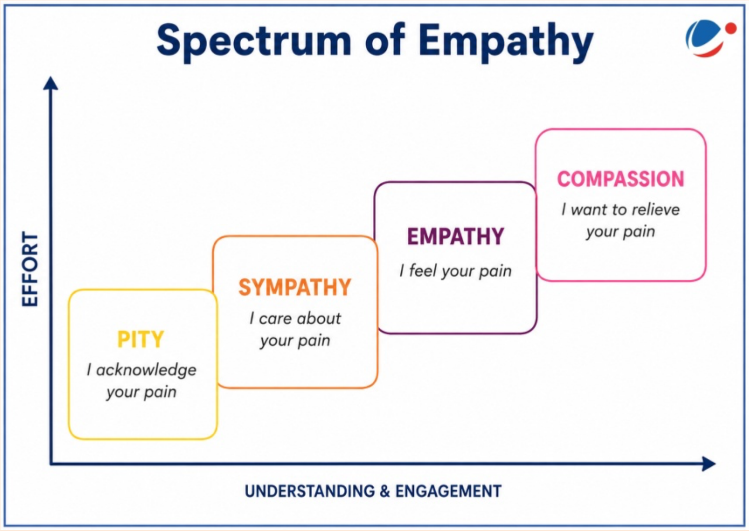
Tukaram Omble of the Maharashtra Police demonstrated exemplary courage and selflessness during the 26/11 Mumbai attacks. By tackling one of the terrorists, he prevented further harm to his fellow servicemen, ultimately sacrificing his life for the nation.

1.4. EMPATHY

Empathy

"Feel, my children, feel; feel for the poor, the ignorant, the downtrodden... Let these be your God." ***– Swami Vivekananda***

- **Meaning:** Empathy is generally defined as the **ability to sense other people's emotions**, coupled with the ability to imagine what someone else might be thinking or feeling**.**
    - Simply put, it is about understanding another person's condition from their perspective and feeling what they must be feeling in the circumstances they are facing.
- **Different natures of Empathy:**
    - **Affective empathy** is the ability to experience others' emotions as one's own and respond accordingly.
    - **Cognitive empathy,** sometimes called perspective taking, refers to our ability to identify and understand other people's emotions.
- **Effectiveness of Empathy:** Enhances bureaucratic effectiveness, people-centric administration, improves emotional intelligence, etc.
- **Empathy and Sympathy:**
    - **Sympathy is instinctive** and largely involves cognitive aspect. **For example**, seeing a poor man on a rainy winter night you would think to do something for him, but may not necessarily do anything.
    - **Empathy is deeper and stronger** than sympathy as it includes emotions as well, apart from that cognitive aspect.
- **Empathy and Compassion:** While Empathy puts oneself in someone else's position to understand what they are going through, the Compassion spurs one to action to help the other person.



<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Empathy in action</th></tr>
<tr>
<td> C F Andrews (also known as Deenbandhu) who fought British along with Mahatma Gandhi understood the plight of the indentured labour and worked with Gopal Krishna Gokhale's anti-indenture campaign, showing empathy towards weaker and vulnerable people in the society.</td>
<td> Ratan Tata, after 1984 riots against the Sikh community, Former Tata Group Chairman Ratan Tata presented an exemplary act of empathy by offering new trucks to the surviving Sikh truck drivers.</td>
</tr>
</table>

1.5. PROBITY

Probity

"It is the bounden duty of a civil servant to remain honest, impartial, and devoted to duty." ***– Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel***

- **Meaning:** Probity originates from the Latin word **'probitas'**, meaning good and is usually regarded as being incorruptible.
    - Probity is defined as the quality of having strong moral principles and strictly following them, such as integrity, honesty, uprightness of character or action.
- **Effectiveness of Probity:**
    - **Good Governance:** A vital requirement to ensure an efficient and effective system of governance and for socio-economic development.
    - **Legitimacy of System:** It builds trust in the institutions of the state and a belief that actions of the state will be for social welfare.
    - **Objectivity:** It provides for an objective and independent view on the fairness of the process.
    - **Reduces bureaucratic hurdles:** It helps address nepotism, favoritism, and political partisanship and facilitates participatory governance.
- **Probity and Integrity**: While integrity is a broader concept encompassing overall moral character, probity tends to be more specific to uprightness and incorruptibility, particularly in professional settings.

Probity in action

Jacinda Ardern (former Prime Minister of New Zealand) resigned in 2023 stating that she no longer had **"enough in the tank"** to do justice to the job. This display of **self-awareness and prioritizing the country's needs over personal ambition exemplifies probity**.

Shanmugam Manjunath (an Indian Oil Corporation officer) fought against widespread adulteration of petrol at several fuel stations, despite facing severe threats. Later, he was shot dead by the owner of a petrol pump. His **commitment to honesty and his courage in the face of danger exemplify probity in its truest sense**.

1.6. HONESTY

Honesty

*"Honesty is indeed the best policy. But he who is not honest to himself cannot be honest to others." -**Mahatma Gandhi***

- **Meaning:** Honesty, **speaking and acting truthfully**, is more than not lying, deceiving, stealing, or cheating.
    - It entails showing respect towards others and having **self-awareness**.
    - Honesty is the **foundation for trust** and is key in social relationships.
- **Honesty in classical ethical frameworks:**
    - In **Aristotelian virtue ethics**, honesty is a virtue that also permeates many other virtues.
        - According to it, a severe lack of honesty would result in an untrustworthy person, while too much honesty might result in someone who says unnecessary truthful things at the expense of people's feelings.
    - **Deontology**, on the other hand, following in the footsteps of **Immanuel Kant**, holds **honesty as an absolute moral obligation, irrespective of the cost**.

Honesty in action

Anil Swarup (retired IAS Officer) implemented transparent e-auction system for coal block allocations, increased transparency in teacher appointments and

Sachin Tendulkar during a 2011 ICC World Cup match was given not out by the on-field umpire for a caught behind. Despite the high stakes of the World Cup, Tendulkar voluntarily walked off the field, effectively giving himself out. This **act of honesty and sportsmanship**, especially in such a crucial

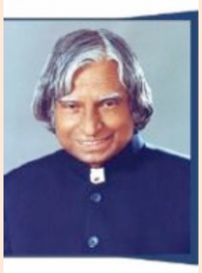
transfers, etc., exemplifying unwavering honesty in governance.	tournament, was widely praised and reinforced his reputation for honesty in the sport.

1.7. DEDICATION TO PUBLIC SERVICE

Dedication to Public Service

> *"A civil servant is not supposed to function like a machine but must bring to his task a sense of dedication and a spirit of service."* ***- Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel***

- **Meaning:** Dedication is the quality of being able to give or apply one's time, attention, or self, entirely to a particular activity, person or cause.
    - Dedication to Public Service means **putting public interests first** – ahead of personal interests.
- Public Servants work for government and citizens and thus **require a high spirit of service** (feeling of contributing to the society or country) and **sacrifice** to better fulfil people's aspirations.
    - For Kant, **an action done from duty has its moral worth, not from the results** it attains or seeks to attain, but from a moral principle or maxim- the **principle of doing one's duty whatever that duty may be.**
- **Dedication and Commitment:** Dedication is different from commitment, in that, commitment is formally obligated/bound, whereas dedication is guided by sense of duty, inspired by some ideals, like that of state or society.

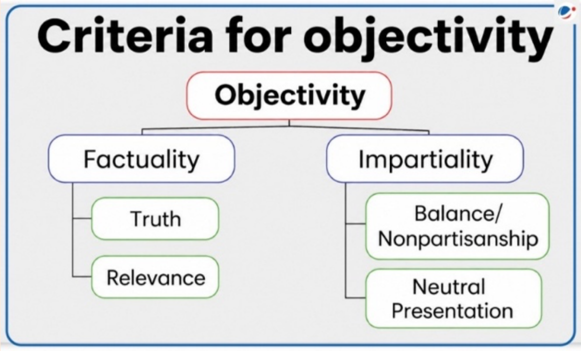
Dedication to Public Service in action	
 **Dr. A P J Abdul Kalam dedicated his life in the service to the nation** in many different forms. His most significant contribution is in heralding the **indigenous missile programme** of India and contributions to the **nuclear programme.**	**Dr. M S Swaminathan** dedicated his life to public service in many forms including collaboration with Dr. Norman Borlaug for Green Revolution in India, giving key recommendations such as National Food Guarantee Act as Chairperson of National Commission on Farmers, etc.

1.8. OBJECTIVITY

Objectivity

> *"A wise man should ascertain objective facts by direct observation, by inference, and by the evidence of reliable persons."* ***- Kautilya***

- **Meaning:** Objectivity is **sticking** to the **facts** - the evidence. It means evaluating a situation **fairly**, based on facts**, without any bias,** personal belief, feelings or external influence.
    - Therefore, it is rational and most of the times, empirical in nature.
- **Objectivity in Civil Services**
    - It allows Public Servants to **uphold rule of law, reason, merit, and accepted standards, practices, and norms**.
    - Objectivity is considered a **means** to achieve the **end-values of equity, justice, and fairness.**



- **Objectivity and Impartiality:** Objectivity focuses on facts and evidence in observations and information analysis while impartiality ensures that judgements or decisions are taken without bias or prejudice.

Objectivity in action

Evidence-based decision-making for implementation of **POSHAN Abhiyan based on POSHAN Tracker dashboard** showcases an example of **objectivity in public policy formulation and implementation**.

Digital portals – PROBITY, SPARROW, and SOLVE – to assess performance of Central Government officers showcases an example of **objectivity in Personnel management**.

1.9. IMPARTIALITY AND NON-PARTISANSHIP

Impartiality and Non-partisanship

"Tolerance and impartiality are the hallmarks of a truly civilized society." ***- Dr. S. Radhakrishnan***

- **Meaning:** Impartiality refers to the act of **not supporting an individual or group over others** and not allowing personal biases to creep into actions.
  - It simply means **not taking any sides** and is commonly understood as a principle of justice.
  - It holds that decisions should be based on objective standards, instead of on the basis of bias, prejudice.
- **Impartiality and Non-Partisanship:** While Impartiality refers to not taking any sides, Non-partisanship (a narrow concept) conveys **apolitical behaviour or political neutrality** by a civil servant.
  - In India, these are ensured through Constitution, Central Civil Services Conduct Rules 1964, All India Services Conduct Rules 1968, and Code of Ethics 1997.
- **Effectiveness of Impartiality and Non-partisanship:**
  - **Public Trust:** Brings credibility and trust in the public with respect to functioning of public service.
  - **Good Governance:** Impartiality empowers public officials to present alternative ideas of governance thus improving public service.
  - **Justice:** Ensures equality, fairness and justice among different sections of society.

Non-partisanship in action

T. N. Seshan, former Chief Election Commissioner of India (1990-1996), implemented several electoral reforms and ensured free and fair elections in a non-partisan manner without succumbing to any political pressure.

Nandan Nilekani, former Chairman of the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI), worked with different governments at the Centre regardless of the ruling party to focus on the technological and administrative aspects of Aadhaar. This showcases Nilekani's non-partisan approach to governance in India.

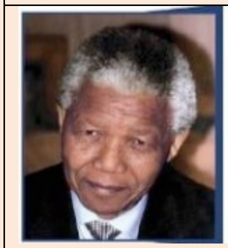
1.10. TOLERANCE

Tolerance

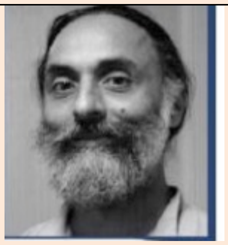
"If we want to cultivate a true spirit of democracy, we cannot afford to be intolerant. Intolerance betrays want of faith in one's cause." - ***Mahatma Gandhi***

- **Meaning**: It refers to fair, objective, and permissive attitude towards those whose opinions, practices, race, religion, nationality, etc. are different from one's own.
  - **Tolerance and mutual respect for diversity** and various social groups are critical to foster harmony and social cohesion in a pluralistic society like India.
  - Lack of tolerance **(Intolerance)** is a reflection of narrow mindedness and is antagonistic to free thinking.
- **Tolerance in Civil Services:**
  - Tolerance is, in fact, a precondition to uphold several other values in civil services including, objectivity, impartiality, non-partisanship, compassion, justice, etc.
  - Tolerance also aids civil servants in inclusive policy formulation and implementation and develops stronger social capital within the society.

Tolerance in Action



Nelson Mandela, after his release from prison and election as President, his leadership was characterized by tolerance and reconciliation. He established the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to address past injustices, without seeking vengeance.



Navtej Singh Johar Case, Supreme Court of India showed remarkable tolerance in its various judgments including granting recognition of 'Third-Gender' to transgender people (NALSA vs. UoI Case, 2014), decriminalizing consensual same-sex relationship, etc.

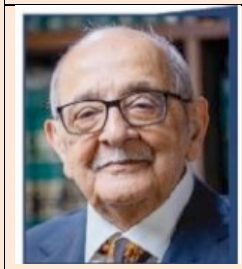
1.11. CONSCIENCE

Conscience

"The voice of conscience is the voice of God." - ***Mahatma Gandhi***

- **Meaning**: Conscience is a special ability of the mind that enables a person to judge how moral his/her own actions are.
  - **Conscience is our innate**, invariant and moral capacity to recognize ethical values and principles.
  - A conscience which is both well-formed and well informed **enables us** to know ourselves and our world and act accordingly.
- **Conscience describes two things:** what a person believes is right and how a person decides what is right.
  - It is like an empty box that can be filled with any type of moral content.
  - **For instance,** while some health practitioners raise conscientious objection to abortion, someone else's conscience might demand performing abortions.
- **Crisis of Conscience:** It is a situation of inner dilemma or the inner conflict between the voice of conscience and the influence of external motivations that compel a person to make a contrary decision.

Conscience in action



Fali Nariman, who was Additional Solicitor General of India during the 1975 Emergency, listened to his conscience and refused to defend the suspension of constitutional rights during the Emergency. He took a stand, maintained his **integrity,** and resigned from his post.

Martin Luther King Jr., demonstrated how a **crisis of conscience** justifies civil disobedience. He argued that a person has a moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws, asserting that one's conscience must actively resist systemic racism because **"injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."**

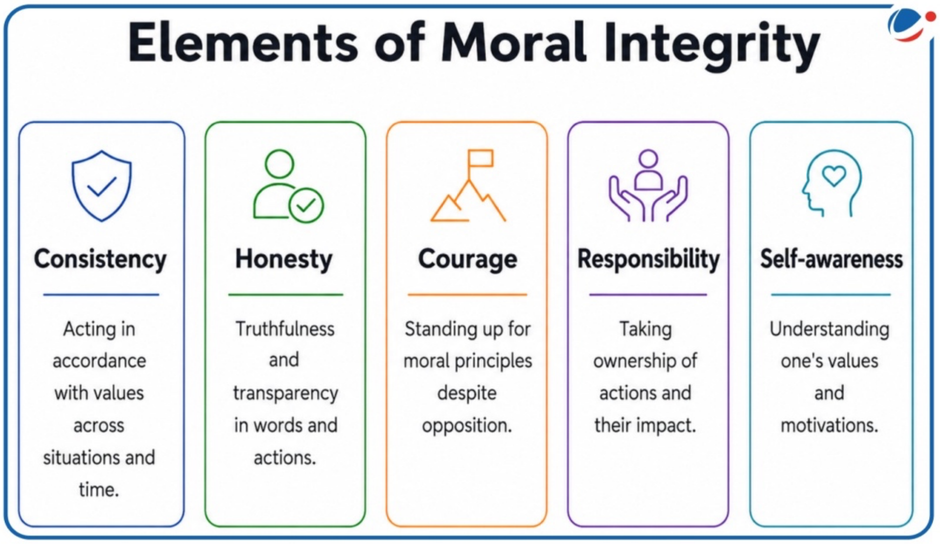
VISIONIAS INSPIRING INNOVATION
MAINS EDGE 45
Ethics Mains Edge 45
Marks Improvement Classes & Mentoring Programme for UPSC Mains 2026
Smart Answer Writing Intervention for GS Paper 4 (Ethics) under the Guidance of Most Experienced Ethics Faculties of VisionIAS
18 Classes
Intensive Learning
Ethic Theory
Quotes & Case Studies
Offline & Online
Flexible Learning Mode
Scan to Download Ethics Topper Copies
Smriti Ma'am
Jatin Sir
Piyush Sir
https://visionias.in/upsc-mains-edge/
Scan Qr or Visit
18 Workbooks
Structured practice for regular writing discipline.
24h Evaluation
2 answers evaluated daily within 24 hours.
Weekly Mentoring
Direct interaction with expert faculties.
Writing Lab
Vision Answer Writing Lab | 8 AM - 8 PM daily.
Full-Length Test
Comprehensive simulation for exam readiness.
Progress Tracking
Detailed tracking + Hand-written Faculty Notes.
10 June, 11 AM

2. ETHICS IN GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

2.1. MORAL INTEGRITY

Introduction

Recently, Chief Justice of India Justice Surya Kant remarked that **moral integrity is a guiding force that does not terminate paths, but rather defines them.** This underscores that moral integrity guides ethical decisions, fostering justice, fairness, and accountability.



Elements of Moral Integrity

Consistency: Acting in accordance with values across situations and time.

Honesty: Truthfulness and transparency in words and actions.

Courage: Standing up for moral principles despite opposition.

Responsibility: Taking ownership of actions and their impact.

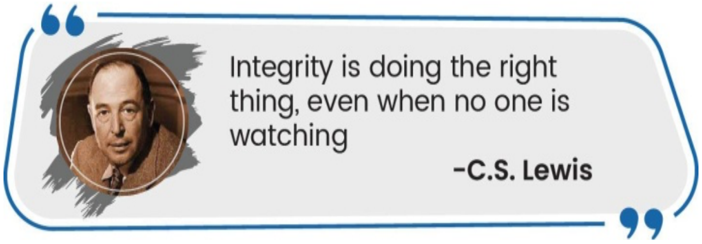
Self-awareness: Understanding one's values and motivations.

What is Moral Integrity?

- **Definition**: It is steadfast adherence to ethical principles even under difficult circumstances, ensuring consistency between beliefs, speech, and actions.

Factors Inhibiting Moral Integrity

- **Conflict of Interest: Personal gain versus public duty** can compromise decision-making (e.g., 2G Spectrum case).
- **Institutional and Systemic Pressures:** Unrealistic targets, bureaucratic red tape, and political interference may push individuals to compromise on ethical choices (e.g., Vyapam Scam in Madhya Pradesh).
- **Greed and Materialism:** Rising consumerism and desire for wealth & power drive unethical behavior (e.g., Satyam Scam).
- **Lack of Transparency and Accountability:** Opaque systems and a **slow and inefficient judiciary** create opportunities for manipulation and ethical compromise **(**e.g., pre-RTI Act, 2005 era).
- **Peer and Social Pressures:** Group Conformity, **fear of consequences,** or desire for approval often overrides ethical principles (e.g., Edward Snowden backlash).
- **Unethical Behavior and Culture of Impunity:** When corruption or unethical conduct goes unpunished, it discourages integrity. (e.g., Criminalisation of Politics).



> Integrity is doing the right thing, even when no one is watching
>
> -C.S. Lewis

Key Stakeholders and Their Interests	
Stakeholder	**Interests**
Public Servants	• Uphold probity, transparency, and impartiality in governance.
Judiciary	• Ensure impartial justice and uphold constitutional morality.
Corporate Leaders	• Promote ethical business to build trust.
Political Leadership	• Serve public interest and upholding democratic values.
Society	• Cultivating honesty, fairness, and justice.

Importance of Moral Integrity in Contemporary Times

- **Individuals:** Builds credibility & trustworthiness (e.g., **Ratan Tata's** ethical practices), provides moral compass for ethical choices (e.g., **Satyendra Dubey's** whistleblowing).
- **Public Administration:** Prevents corruption (e.g., **Ashok Khemka**, RTI Act), ensures citizen-centric governance (e.g., **Metro Man** E. Sreedharan, **Singapore's** public service code).
- **Judiciary:** Judges must act with impartiality, **upholding Constitutional Morality** (e.g., Navtej Johar Case, 2018).
- **Corporate Sector:** Promotes ethical practices, ESG **(Environmental, Social, Governance)** norms (e.g., Infosys, Toyota's net-zero goals by 2050).
- **Civil Society Activism & Journalism**: Integrity ensures facts over sensationalism, and countering fake news. (e.g., Anna Hazare's movement).
- **Technology**: Guides ethical decisions on privacy, bias (e.g., Tim Berners-Lee's advocated for an open, decentralized, and privacy-respecting internet).

Conclusion

Moral integrity is the bedrock of a just society, ensuring ethical conduct, fairness and accountability. As Mahatma Gandhi observed, **"Morality is the basis of things and truth is the substance of all morality."**

2.2. TRUST IN PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

Introduction

Recent allegations of political misuse against Indian institutions (ECI, ED, and CBI) have sparked concerns over eroding public trust. This mirrors a broader global decline highlighted in the **UN's World Social Report 2025**, which notes that over half the world's population now lacks trust in their government.

Understanding Trust

> "The essence of good government is trust.
>
> **-Kathleen Sebelius**"

- **Definition:** Defined by the OECD as **"a person's belief that another person or institution will act consistently with their expectation of positive behaviour."**
    - It is a fundamental component of the social contract and essential for effective governance.
- **Types of Trust:**
    - **Horizontal:** Interpersonal trust among members of a community.
    - **Vertical:** Trust between community members and their governing institutions.
    - **Social:** Generalized faith in strangers, reflecting long-term societal optimism.
    - **Political:** Confidence in institutional bodies and their actors (e.g., the executive, judiciary, bureaucracy, media, and NGOs).

Key Stakeholders and Their Interests	
Stakeholder	**Interests**
Citizens	• Efficient service delivery, democratic participation, and overall well-being/regime stability.
Govt. Institutions	• Policy legitimacy, voluntary compliance, and effective governance without excessive coercion.
Civil Society & Media	• Accountability, freedom of expression, and advocacy for citizen rights.
Private Sector	• Regulatory predictability, contract enforcement, and a fair, low-corruption business environment.

Reasons for the Erosion of Institutional Trust

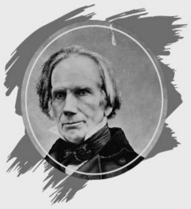
- **Administrative Failures (2nd ARC):** Poor service quality, unresponsiveness, and the subjective or negative abuse of authority.
- **Economic Insecurity (UNDESA):** Failure of the state to uphold the social contract of economic stability; trust is significantly lower among **economically vulnerable** and **less-educated groups**.
- **Political Exclusion:** Marginalized sections lack the influence to demand accountability, better services, or redistributive policies.
- **Corruption & Scandals:** Illegal or unethical activities suggest that institutions prioritize private interests over the public good.
- **Disinformation & social media:** Platforms amplify real or perceived failures and use targeted campaigns to manipulate public perception of institutional legitimacy (e.g., election outcomes).
- **Judicial Inefficiency:** A slow judicial system impairs the rule of law and prevents effective grievance redressal against public institutions.

Major Drivers of Trust in Public Institutions

Competencies	
Reliability	Ensuring public safety during emergencies, safeguarding personal data for legitimate use, and delivering satisfactory administrative services.
Responsiveness	Improving services based on public feedback, adopting innovative solutions, and relying on evidence-based decision-making.
Values	
Transparency	Providing easy access to information, enabling citizen participation in policymaking, and clearly communicating the impacts of reforms.
Integrity	Maintaining strict accountability across government branches (executive, legislative, and judiciary).
Fairness	Guaranteeing consistent and equitable treatment for all individuals and businesses, alongside diverse regional and group representation in Parliament.

Measures to Rebuild Trust in Public Institutions: A Way Forward

- **Citizen Engagement:** Promote open, inclusive policymaking through participatory mechanisms like **Social Audits**.
- **Effective Service Delivery:** Ensure consistent, positive citizen experiences via efficient mechanisms (e.g., Direct Benefit Transfers).
- **Transparency & Communication:** Make policy data openly accessible and verifiable using public government dashboards.
- **Ethical Governance:** Uphold administrative integrity, equity, and prioritize the welfare of marginalized groups.
- **Anti-Corruption Mechanisms:** Empower independent oversight bodies (**e.g.,** Lokpal and Lokayukta) to swiftly handle public corruption complaints.
- **Institutional Harmony:** Foster cooperative relationships between the legislature and executive while safeguarding a fiercely independent judiciary.



> “**Government** is a **trust,** and the **officers** of the **government** are **trustees.** And both the **trust** and the **trustees** are **created** for the benefit of the **people.**
>
> **-Henry Clay**”

- **Tackling Misinformation:** Establish Fact-Checking Units and leverage technology to protect the integrity of democratic discourse.

Conclusion

Trust is integral to the functioning of any society. Societal trust in government is a **vital precondition for representative democracy.** Eroding this trust indicates a **crisis of democracy**, severely impairing democratic institutions and actors.

2.3. PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE AND PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY

Introduction

Recent disasters, including the Vikramshila Setu and Vadodara bridge collapses, fatal train collisions, and airport roof cave-ins, highlight a deadly pattern. **Under social contract theory,** the government holds the responsibility to provide these public services safely to its citizens. **However,** these recurring incidents expose a systemic failure by authorities to ensure safe public service delivery.

Ethical Issues in the governance of Infrastructure Development

- **Inefficient administrative machinery**: It acts as an obstacle to effective implementation of development plans. E.g., **negligence of responsibility**
- **Policy issues**: **Quality** of service delivery is neglected. E.g., **L1 contract method** (lowest bidder wins), prioritizes **cost over quality and safety**.
- **Lack of probity**: Public servants **recuse themselves from the responsibility** of ensuring quality service delivery. E.g., **Delhi floods** caused by jammed gates of Yamuna barrage.
- **Other:** lack of motivation for striving for excellence, etc.

Ethical issues involved in Public Service Delivery

- **Lack of Professional ethics:** Public servants often lack the managerial skills to ensure effective service delivery.
- **Lack of a public service attitude**: Public servants prioritizing **personal gains** over their public **duty** and responsibility.
- **Corruption**: E.g., **Leakages** in PDS distribution, **inclusion and exclusion errors** in schemes.
- **Accountability and transparency: Lack of just and fair treatment** of malafide errors weakens **deterrence** towards corrupt practices.

Seven Step Model for Citizen Centricity (2nd Administrative Reforms Committee)

1. **Define** all services which you provide and **identify** your clients
2. Set **standards** and norms for each service
3. Develop **capability** to meet the set standards
4. **Perform** to achieve the standards
5. **Monitor performance** against the set standards.
6. **Evaluate** the **impact** through an independent mechanism
7. **Continuous improvement** based on monitoring and evaluation of results

Case Studies

- **Commission for Right to Services**: constituted by states like **Maharashtra, West Bengal, Punjab** etc.
- **Right to Public Services Legislations** passed by more than 20 states. E.g., **The Haryana Right to Service Act, 2014.**

Why are issues Persistent in Public Service Delivery?

- **Lack of effective implementation** of service improvement systems, including rules and regulations for civil servants.
- **Rigidity in the administration:** Resistance of administration to reforms and change.

- **Political constraints:** Political interests prioritized above public interest hinder equitable public service delivery.
- **Neglect of reforms for ethical grassroot bureaucracy:** Most reforms and changes cater to administrative reforms at higher levels of bureaucracy.

Way Forward: Promoting Better Public Service Delivery

> "The **quality of public administration** of a country largely depends on the **honesty and integrity of its administrators."** – The Standards and Techniques of Public Administration, published by the United Nations (UN),1951

- **Administrative reforms**: Measures like **Citizen's Charter, a responsive grievance redressal** mechanism and **fixing accountability** of every public servant.
- **New Public Management (NPM):** It involves the adoption of **efficient practices** from the **private** sector to apply in the public sector. (See Box)
- **Human capital development**: Recruitment and training of capable public servants and inculcating **ethical values of public service**. E.g., **Mission Karmayogi.**
- **Promote E-governance**: E.g., Unified Mobile Application for New-age Governance **(UMANG)**.
- **Monitoring Project Implementation**: Ensuring **regular audits** at multiple levels. E.g., ICT-based, multi-modal platform for Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation **(PRAGATI)**.

Characteristics of New Public Management (NPM)

- **Separation** of strategic policy from operational management.
- **Result-orientation** along with focus on processes and procedures.
- **Citizen-centric orientation** rather than focus on interests of organisations or bureaucrats
- **Provider to enabler**: increased involvement of the **private and voluntary sectors** in service delivery and strategic decision-making. E.g. **Contracting-out and PPP.**
- **Entrepreneurial management culture**. E.g., Total Quality Management (TQM), IS 15700:2005.
  - IS 15700:2005 is the **Indian Standard for Quality Management Systems** given by **BIS**.

Conclusion

In the fast-changing world, the **role of the government has increased**, particularly in the provision of **service delivery**. The **governance structure needs to evolve** from a **monolithic bureaucratic hierarchy** towards **multi-level institutions** that interpenetrate **civil society** and **minimize the gap between government and the citizens**.

2.4. ETHICS OF WHISTLEBLOWING

Introduction

Whistleblowing is both a **test** of individual courage and a **mirror** for institutional health. When those who expose wrongdoing face retaliation instead of protection, it signals a gap between policy and practice. Strengthening this space isn't just about safeguarding individuals; it's about building the kind of accountability that lets institutions correct themselves before crises.

What is Whistleblowing?

- **Definition:** It is the **disclosure of information** to the public or some higher authority about any wrongdoing, which could be in the form of a fraud, corruption, etc. in a company or government.
  - **Whistleblower** is the person who reports/discloses the wrongdoing or the unethical act. E.g., Late Shanmugam Manjunath among others.
- **Types of Whistleblowers/ Whistleblowing**:
  - **Internal**: Reporting the misconduct, fraud, or indiscipline to senior officers of the organization.
  - **External**: Reporting the wrongdoings to people outside the organization such as the media or police.

Key Stakeholders and Their Interests	
Stakeholder	**Interests**
Citizens/Society	- Access to information about government activities.
Government	- Balancing national security concerns with transparency.
Organization	- Protecting their reputation, addressing the reported issues internally, if possible, etc.
Regulatory Bodies	- Enforcing compliance with laws and regulations.
Media	- Reporting disclosure without revealing identity of Whistleblower
Advocacy groups/NGOs	- Promoting transparency and accountability and supporting whistleblowers.

Ethical Dilemmas Involved in Whistleblowing

- **Protection of whistleblowers vs. National security:** Balance between safeguarding individuals who expose wrongdoing and ensuring government responsibility while considering threats to national security.
- **Media responsibility vs. Ethical Information handling:** The media has a moral duty to tell the people about government action while handling dangerous or sensitive information in a responsible manner.
- **Public right to information vs. Government need for confidentiality:** Balance between citizens' right to know about government's actions and the government's necessity to uphold confidentiality in certain matters.
- **Duty of loyalty vs. Moral obligation:** Conflict between an employee's duty to their employer and their moral obligation to report wrongdoing.
- **Protection vs. Accountability:** Ethical considerations in protecting whistleblowers from retaliation and ensuring accountability for false or malicious reporting.

Initiatives Taken to Protect Whistleblowers in India

- **Whistleblowers Protection Act, 2014:** Safeguards against victimization of persons who make public interest disclosures.
- **The Companies Act, 2013 (Section 177)**: Stipulates listed companies to establish a vigil mechanism for directors and employees to report genuine concerns.
- **SEBI (Securities and Exchange Board of India) Regulations, 2015:** SEBI has mandated listed companies to frame whistleblower policies.
- **Guidelines for Corporate Governance for Insurers in India: Guidelines issued by IRDAI** advise companies regulated by it to set up a **'Whistle Blower Policy'**.
- **Protected Disclosures Scheme for Private Sector and Foreign Banks**: Scheme of RBI wherein the banks are required to formulate a whistleblower policy/vigil mechanism.

Indian Laws/Rules To Protect Government Secret Information

- **The Official Secrets Act, 1923:** It provides the framework for **dealing with espionage, sedition, and other potential threats** to the integrity of the nation.
- **Rule 11 of Central Civil Services (Conduct) Rules, 1964:** It deals with the Communication of Official Information by the government servants.
- **Section 8(1) in The Right to Information Act, 2005:** It gives exemption from disclosure of information which would prejudicially affect the sovereignty and integrity of India.

Measures Required to Promote Culture of Whistleblowing

- **Strengthen and Implement Existing Laws**: Strengthen and Implement the **Whistleblowers Protection Act, 2014** effectively and ensure robust enforcement mechanisms.

- **Extend Protection to Private Sector:** Develop comprehensive legislation covering both public and private sectors and encourage corporate policies to protect whistleblowers.
- **Media Protection:** Strengthen laws protecting journalists who work with whistleblowers and ensure freedom of press in reporting on whistleblower cases.
- **Balance Access to Information and Secrecy:** Need to ensure freedom, liberty, and access to information to public at the same time maintain secrecy about national security.

> The **humanities** teach us the **value,** even for **business,** of **criticism** and dissent. When there's a culture of going along to get along, where **whistleblowers** are **discouraged,** bad things happen and businesses **implode.**
>
> **-Martha C. Nussbaum**

Conclusion

Whistleblowing is **essential for promoting transparency and accountability** but involves **ethical dilemma**s around **confidentiality and national security**. Strengthening legal protections and striking a balance between public interest and state secrecy is crucial. A rob**ust framework** will empower whistleblowers and uphold democratic values.

2.5. ETHICS AND POLITICS: THE CRISIS OF DEMOCRATIC ETHICS

Introduction

A profound **ethical deficit is hollowing out modern democracy** and highlighting a **growing disconnect between public morality and political power.** From Western lobbying scandals to coldly rationalized mass civilian casualties in Gaza and Ukraine shows that **realpolitik is driving a global crisis of conscience.** Ultimately, this trend raises the **urgent issue of accelerating moral erosion in contemporary democratic politics.**

Key Stakeholders and Their Interests	
Stakeholder	**Interests**
Lawmakers	• Act as trustees of the public will; enact legislation and maintain electoral viability.
The Electorate	• Participate in civic duties, hold leaders accountable, and benefit from the greatest good.
Financial Backers	• Fund political campaigns and seek favorable policy environments.
Judiciary	• Uphold the rule of law, dismantle impunity, and ensure swift accountability.
Political Parties	• Aggregate public interests, select candidates, and form governments.
Civil Society & Press	• Act as vigilant watchdogs and uphold Constitutional Morality.
Civil Servants	• Administer governance and implement public policies fairly.

The Moral Decline

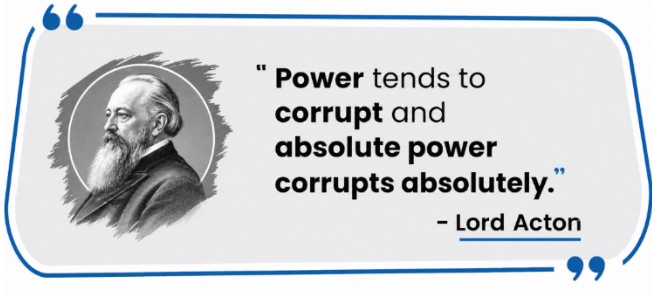
- **Criminalisation of Politics:** 45% of Indian MLAs face criminal cases (ADR 2025). Despite Supreme Court directives, parties continue fielding tainted candidates based solely on **electoral winnability.**
- **Money Power & Electoral Ethics:** Obscene spending and opaque funding distort democratic equality. Although the SC scrapped anonymous **Electoral Bonds** in 2024 to curb the corporate-political nexus, the ECI still seized a record ₹8,889 crores during the recent General Election.
- **Erosion of Deliberative Democracy:** Frequent disruptions and strict party whips neutralize the conscience votes of MPs. Alarmingly, in 2023, critical criminal codes were passed without debate after 146 opposition MPs were suspended.
- **Populism & Moral Hazard:** Unaffordable freebies blur the line between genuine welfare and electoral bribes.

  - The RBI warns that states are burdening future generations with unsustainable debt purely for immediate electoral victories.
- **Institutional Capture:** Political interference compromises the neutrality of civil servants, regulatory bodies, and investigative agencies (like the ED and CBI), severely eroding democratic checks and balances.

Root Causes - Why Ethics Erodes in Politics?	
Structural/Systemic Causes	**Cultural/Attitudinal Causes**
• **Winner-takes-all** electoral system rewarding power at any cost • High cost of elections **incentivising corruption** • **Weak party internal democracy**; candidates chosen by power, not merit • **Slow judicial processes** allowing tainted politicians to function for decades • **Opaque political finance** lacking real-time disclosure	• **Voter tolerance** of criminal candidates due to caste/community loyalty • **Normalisation** of unethical politics e.g., "Sab chor hain" (everyone is corrupt) • **Short political memory**; media cycle moving on from scandals • **Lack of civic education** on political rights and responsibilities • **Transactional voting** driven by inducements rather than values

Ethical Failures and Their Systemic Impacts

- **Virtue Ethics (Aristotle)** demands justice and prudence. **Failure signals that power trumps principle**, eroding societal morality and deterring honest candidates.
- **Deontology (Kant)** requires absolute truthfulness. Abandoning duties for convenience breeds deep public cynicism, reducing civic participation and democratic legitimacy.
- **Consequentialism (Mill)** seeks the **greatest good**. Politicians weaponize this to rationalize unethical means, replacing vital structural reforms with fiscally ruinous populism.
- **Social Contract (Rousseau)** politicians are trustees of the public will. **Betraying this trust drives regulatory capture**, prioritizing wealthy donors and degrading parliamentary debate.
- **Justice as Fairness (Rawls)** requires suspending partisan advantage. **Failure means** crafting policies that explicitly favor politicians and backers, **deepening inequality and crony capitalism.**


" Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely."
– Lord Acton

Way Forward: Ensuring Democratic Ethics in Politics

- **Institutionalizing Probity & Accountability:** Enforce a binding code of ethics, mandate real-time financial disclosures to curb cronyism, and establish fast-track courts for the swift accountability of elected officials.
- **Fostering Public Service Values:** Prioritize integrity over electoral winnability. Balance genuine welfare with fiscal prudence against unethical populism, and strictly safeguard the impartiality of civil servants and the judiciary.
- **Driving Attitudinal Change in Society:** Promote grassroots civic education to shift voters toward value-based voting. Empower civil society and an independent press as vigilant watchdogs upholding Constitutional Morality.
- **Reviving 'Trusteeship' & Ethical Leadership:** Embrace Gandhi's philosophy of Trusteeship. Elected representatives must view their office as a sacred trust, acting solely as empathetic, moral stewards of the public good.

Conclusion

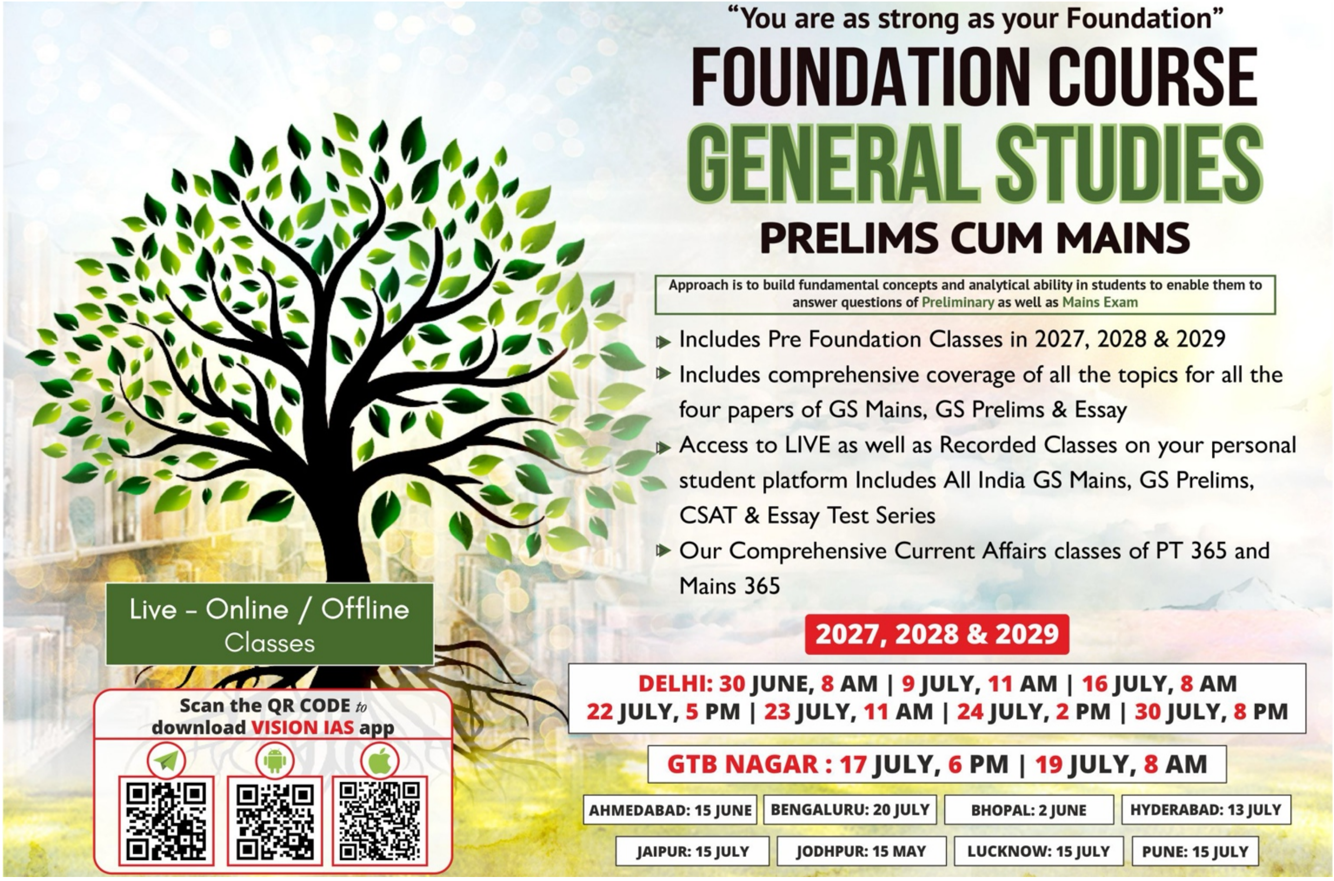
Aristotle argued that man is a political animal, and the quality of political life reflects societal ethics. Its moral decline threatens democracy's core premise of the common good. Restoring political ethics demands institutional reform, strict accountability, and citizens demanding absolute integrity. Ultimately, realizing India's constitutional vision requires choosing politics as public trusteeship rather than personal extraction.

2.6. KEY WORDS

Key Words			
Moral Integrity	Ethical Governance	Citizen-centric Governance	Social Contract
Probity	Conflict of Interest	Deontology	Constitutional Morality

2.7. PRACTICE QUESTION

Answer Canvas		
The erosion of moral integrity among public officials and political leaders leads to a profound crisis of trust in democratic institutions. Analyze this statement in the context of contemporary governance and suggest measures to restore ethical trusteeship.		
Introduction: Begin by defining moral integrity as steadfast adherence to ethical principles. Connect it to the Social Contract theory, explaining how its absence triggers the erosion of public institutional trust today	**Body:** Highlight causes like political criminalization, systemic pressures, and greed eroding democratic ethics. Describe impacts like administrative failures. Suggest solutions like enforcing transparency, protecting whistleblowers, and adopting strict public accountability mechanisms.	**Conclusion:** Summarize that restoring institutional trust requires leaders to act as public trustees. Conclude using Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy that morality and truth form the essential bedrock of fair, accountable democratic governance.



"You are as strong as your Foundation"
FOUNDATION COURSE
GENERAL STUDIES
PRELIMS CUM MAINS
Approach is to build fundamental concepts and analytical ability in students to enable them to answer questions of Preliminary as well as Mains Exam
- Includes Pre Foundation Classes in 2027, 2028 & 2029
- Includes comprehensive coverage of all the topics for all the four papers of GS Mains, GS Prelims & Essay
- Access to LIVE as well as Recorded Classes on your personal student platform Includes All India GS Mains, GS Prelims, CSAT & Essay Test Series
- Our Comprehensive Current Affairs classes of PT 365 and Mains 365

Live – Online / Offline Classes
Scan the QR CODE to download VISION IAS app
2027, 2028 & 2029
DELHI: 30 JUNE, 8 AM | 9 JULY, 11 AM | 16 JULY, 8 AM
22 JULY, 5 PM | 23 JULY, 11 AM | 24 JULY, 2 PM | 30 JULY, 8 PM
GTB NAGAR : 17 JULY, 6 PM | 19 JULY, 8 AM
AHMEDABAD: 15 JUNE | BENGALURU: 20 JULY | BHOPAL: 2 JUNE | HYDERABAD: 13 JULY
JAIPUR: 15 JULY | JODHPUR: 15 MAY | LUCKNOW: 15 JULY | PUNE: 15 JULY

3. ETHICS AND SOCIETY

3.1. RIGHT TO DIE WITH DIGNITY

Introduction

The Supreme Court, in **Harish Rana v. Union of India (March 2026**), for the first time applied its passive euthanasia guidelines, highlighting the principle of **Right to Die with Dignity**.

About the Right

- **Meaning:** Terminally ill individuals can choose **end-of-life decisions** to avoid prolonged **pain and suffering**.
- **Euthanasia** (means **good death in Greek**) is a means to realise this right for a terminally ill person.
    - **Active:** Using lethal drugs is **illegal** in India.
    - **Passive:** Withholding life support is **allowed**.
- **Status in India**
    - **2011: Aruna Shanbaug case;** Passive euthanasia allowed.
    - **2018: Common Cause case; Article 21** includes **Right to Die with Dignity**; legalised passive euthanasia and **living wills**.

> "A long illness between life and death makes **death a comfort** both to those who die and to those who remain"
>
> **–Jean de La Bruyere**
> (French Philosopher)

Key Stakeholders and Their Interests	
Stakeholders	**Interests**
Terminally Ill Patients and Their Families	• **Patients:** Endure **severe pain**, emotional and **financial distress**. • **Families:** Struggle with **grief** and desire to **ease suffering**.
Healthcare Providers	• Bound by **Hippocratic Oath** to **alleviate suffering**, but face **moral dilemmas** between **autonomy** and preserving life.
Legislators and Policymakers	• Must **protect rights** and **prevent misuse** of the **Right to Die with Dignity**.
Society at large	• Balances **sanctity of life** with growing emphasis on **personal autonomy** and **dignity**.

Ethical Dilemmas Involved in the Right to Die with Dignity

- **Quality vs. Sanctity of Life:** Is life meaningful amid extreme **pain** or **loss of dignity**?
- **Autonomy vs. Constitutional Morality:** Can **personal choice** override legal or moral limits?
- **Palliative Care vs. Justice:** Should we allow **dignified death** where care fails?
- **Non-maleficence vs. Double Effect:** Can doctors relieve pain even if it **shortens life**?

Arguments in Favour	Arguments Against
• **Quality of Life:** Goes beyond survival; includes **well-being** and **relationships**. • **Respect for Autonomy:** Individuals should decide their **end-of-life** choices. ○ E.g., Bhishma's Iksha Mrityu, Socrates' choice of death. • **Principle of Double Effect:** Doctors often prescribe drugs with the intention to **relieve pain**, despite	• **Sanctity of Life:** Life is of **intrinsic value**. E.g., **Ahimsa in Buddhism.** • **Constitutional Morality: Religious freedom** is limited by **Article 25**. • **Palliative Care:** Evolving medicine can manage **suffering** without euthanasia. • **Non-maleficence:** Doctors must **"do no harm"** (Hippocratic Oath).

knowing that the drugs will shorten the patient's life. • **Justice:** When care fails, continued treatment may be **harmful** and **burdensome**.	• **Kantian View:** Ending life violates **moral duty**. • **Potential Misuse:** Autonomy may be **abused** for minors or under pressure.

Way Forward on Ensuring the Right to Die with Dignity

- **Establishing Interpretative Dialogues: Regular communication** facilitates understanding the patient's opinion towards their life, health, and sickness.
- **Effective Regulation:** Practice of Euthanasia should be **effectively regulated** to ensure it is performed only **under hospital settings** with the **certification of at least 2 physicians** and full documentation.
- **Prevent Misuse:** Before executing euthanasia, there should be a **thorough psychological evaluation, counselling, wait period**, to ensure that the patient is not improperly influenced.
- **Care Ethics Approach:** Apply a care-based approach, especially for **minors and mentally vulnerable patients**. Focus on understanding lived experiences and responding to emotional needs with empathy.

Conclusion

Medical advances may extend life, but they cannot always relieve suffering. When pain becomes unbearable, the **right to die with dignity** deserves thoughtful consideration; supported by strong ethical guidelines and strict regulations to prevent misuse.

3.2. INCLUSIVE GROWTH

Introduction

Despite the World Bank's data showing that extreme poverty has dropped to 2.3% and a consumption-based Gini coefficient has fallen to 25.5, making India the 4th most equal country, a rising income-based Gini coefficient to 61 (according to the World Inequality Database) underscores persistent disparities. This urgently demands strong distributive justice to achieve truly inclusive economic prosperity.

Key Ethical Principles Underlying Inclusive Growth

- **Gandhian Ethics:**
  - **Trusteeship Theory:** Wealth as a social trust; surplus for community welfare.
  - **Talisman:** Judge Actions by their impact on the poorest.
  - **Sarvodaya:** Development must uplift all.
- **Kant's Categorical Imperative:** Excluding the marginalised fails the moral test of universal fairness.
- **Rawls' Difference Principle:** Inequalities are justifiable only if they benefit the least advantaged (e.g., **progressive taxation, CSR**).

> As long as poverty, injustice and gross inequality persist in our world, none of us can truly rest.
>
> **-Nelson Mandela**

- **Constitutional Morality:** Upholds **justice, equality, and dignity** beyond the text of the Constitution.
- **Religious Ethics:**
  - **Mahabharata:** Wealth's purpose is to aid the poor.
  - **Jainism (Aparigraha):** Rejects hoarding, promotes sharing.
  - **Islam (Zakat):** Mandatory charity ensures redistribution.
  - **Stewardship Principle:** Wealth as divine trust, to serve all.

Key Stakeholders and Their Interests	
Stakeholders	**Interests**
Government	• Serve constitutional duty (e.g., DPSPs) and fulfill policy role (e.g. progressive taxation).

International Institutions (UNDP, World Bank, etc.)	- Reducing global inequalities (North vs. South).
Civil Society	- Acting as moral voice and playing advocacy role.
Corporates / Private Players	- Shareholder perspective (short term growth), Stakeholders' perspective (long term growth)

Ensuring Inclusive Growth: The Way Forward

- **Accountability and transparency in governance**: E.g., Centralised Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS).
- **Adopting the capability approach of Amartya Sen:** E.g., Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojna
- **Promote Ethical Corporate Practices:** encourage CSR, fair wages, and stakeholder-oriented governance e.g., Mahindra & Mahindra's - Project Nanhi Kali.
- **Sustainable Development:** e.g., Mission LiFE **& Inculcating inclusive values:** e.g., National Education Policy 2020.

Conclusion

Inclusive growth is fundamentally a **moral imperative**. By synergizing ethical governance, corporate responsibility, and citizen empowerment, we can transform economic progress into true, equitable prosperity for all.

3.3. ETHICS OF STRAY DOG MANAGEMENT

Introduction

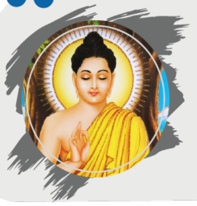
India's stray dog crisis poses a profound **ethical dilemma between public safety and animal welfare**. Driven by increasing cases, **the Supreme Court** in its May 2026 verdict mandated relocating strays from institutional spaces and permitted euthanasia solely for rabid or aggressive dogs, expressly prohibiting mass culling. This highlights the governance challenge of balancing utilitarian human protection with compassionate animal management.

Key Stakeholders and Their Interests	
Stakeholders	**Interests**
Residents	- Bound by the **fundamental duty of compassion** (Article 51A(g)) but face severe safety and health risks, particularly vulnerable groups like children and the elderly.
Pet Owners	- Fuel the stray population through abandonment, but can drive solutions through responsible ownership.
Government & Agencies	- Municipalities bear the constitutional duty to manage stray populations (**Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (PCA) Act, 1960**).
Supreme Court	- Mandates a balanced legal approach that safeguards both public safety and animal rights.
Animal Welfare Organizations	- Advocate for humane, rights-based management (sterilization, vaccination, Animal Birth Control rules) and strictly oppose culling.

Ethical Conflicts in Stray Dog Management

- **Compassion vs. Public Safety:** Feeding strays sustains them but can inadvertently increase their population and territorial aggression.
- **Animal vs. Human Rights:** The fundamental right of animals to live free from suffering (with the Supreme Court extending Article 21 to animals in the 2014 Jallikattu case) frequently collides with the human right to safety and security.
- **Deontology vs. Utilitarianism:** Kantian ethics argue for treating animals with inherent dignity (opposing forced relocation), challenging the utilitarian approach of removing animals merely for human convenience.
- **Non-Maleficence Dilemma:** The principle of "**do no harm**" demands protecting both humans and animals, yet current strategies often fail by either using cruel control methods or inadequately managing populations.

- **Rights-Duties Paradox:** Even though animals cannot bear legal duties, their sentience and vulnerability inherently entitle them to rights and protection.



> All tremble at violence; all fear death. Putting oneself in the place of another, one should not kill nor cause another to kill.
>
> **-Gautam Buddha**

Ways for Ethical Management of Stray Dogs

- **Beneficence (Proactive Welfare):** Implementing systematic sterilization and vaccination (e.g., ABC Rules 2023) and incentivizing shelter adoption (e.g., the Netherlands taxing store-bought dogs).
- **Proportionality & Graduated Response:** Utilizing evidence-based, locally tailored interventions that escalate from the least harmful measures (e.g., SC mandating shelters and sterilization during rabies spikes).
- **Virtue Ethics:** Cultivating compassion and moral responsibility through active community engagement and education.
- **Disease Control:** Strengthening bite surveillance and phased prevention initiatives under the National Rabies Control Program.
- **Empowering Local Bodies:** Entrusting on-ground management to RWAs and NGOs, backed by financial support from the broader community.

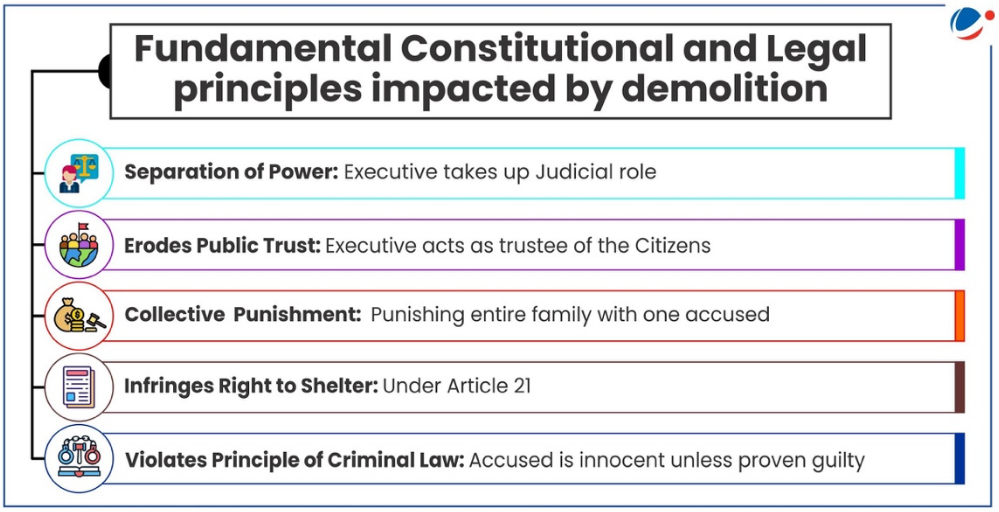
Conclusion

Stray dog management is a complex problem requiring multi-stakeholder approach including local governance bodies, communities and animal rights activists, ultimately moving towards One Health Approach.

3.4. INSTANT JUSTICE

Introduction

The rising execution of **bulldozer justice** and police half-encounters in 2025-2026, defying Supreme Court directives, marks a critical ethical crisis in Indian governance. By normalizing arbitrary power, this **instant justice breaches the social contract**, effectively replacing the rule of law with the rule of force.



Fundamental Constitutional and Legal principles impacted by demolition

Separation of Power: Executive takes up Judicial role

Erodes Public Trust: Executive acts as trustee of the Citizens

Collective Punishment: Punishing entire family with one accused

Infringes Right to Shelter: Under Article 21

Violates Principle of Criminal Law: Accused is innocent unless proven guilty

Concept of Justice

- Justice is the ethical, philosophical idea that **everyone should be treated fairly and equally by the law. Justice is not a static concept**, but rather one that is constantly evolving.
- **John Rawls** in his **Theory of Justice** proposed **two principles of justice**: the principle of equal basic liberties and the difference principle.
  - The former ensures **equal rights and freedoms for all**, while the latter allows for **inequalities as long as they benefit the least advantaged** members of society.

Types of Justice	
Justice	**Concept**
Distributive justice	• Also referred to as **Economic Justice,** it is concerned with giving all members of the society **"a fair share"** of the benefits and resources available.

Procedural justice	• **Rules must be impartially followed** and consistently applied in order to generate an unbiased decision.
Retributive justice	• Idea that **people deserve to be treated in the same way they treat others**. • It is a **retroactive approach** that justifies punishment as a response to past injustice or wrongdoing.
Restorative Justice	• **Seeks to repair** and **prevent similar harms** from happening in the future by bringing both the accuser and accused together to address and communicate their needs.
Rehabilitative Justice	• Punishment can prevent future crime by **reforming individual offender's behavior**. • Involves **education and vocational programmes, counseling,** or **skills training.**

Ethical Issues Involved in Instant Justice

- **Rule of Law:** Replaces idea of rule of law with arbitrary, biased judgments.
- **Due Process:** Skips legal safeguards, denying fair trials (Article 21) and the presumption of innocence.
- **Retributive Justice:** Embodies the worst aspects of retributive punishment over reform.
- **Means vs. Ends:** Questions whether perceived crime deterrence justifies violating fundamental ethical and legal procedures.

Reasons behind Growing Cases of Instant Justice

- **Diminished faith in law:** Inordinate legal delays erode public trust, reinforcing that **justice delayed is denied**. (Law Commission (239th report))
- **Legal ignorance:** Many are ignorant of legal processes and mistakenly view mob violence as the only true justice.
- **High emotions:** Heinous crimes trigger impulsive, revenge-driven community acts.
- **Misinformation:** Viral social media rapidly mobilizes vigilante crowds.
- **Sensational media:** Unethical journalism stokes public outrage.
- **Public perception:** People often celebrate police encounters as strong future crime deterrents.

Key Stakeholders and Their Interests	
Stakeholders	**Interests**
Victims and Their Families	• Access to Justice, Right to Fair Trial, Human Right Protection, Dignity, etc.
Law Enforcement and Judiciary	• Rule of law, Criminal Justice System, Proportionality in crime and Punishment, Delivering fair and impartial punishment
Society at Large	• Speedy justice, Faith in Judicial System, Law and Order, Public Safety
Perpetrators (Alleged or Convicted)	• Quick Justice Delivery, Protecting the vulnerable, Popular Public narrative on crime
Government	• Fair Criminal Justice System, Balancing individual rights with collective security, etc.

Ways to Deal with the Culture of Instant Justice

- **Balancing justice:** Blend retributive and restorative approaches to ensure justice is demonstrably served without improper interference. **Ensuring justice is not only done, but also seen to be done.**
- **Judicial reforms:** Enhance legal transparency and efficiency to rebuild public trust. Implement key Supreme Court guidelines (e.g., D.K. Basu case, 1996; PUCL case, 2014) to address instant justice.
- **Institutional accountability:** Police must uphold the accused's constitutional right to a fair trial to prove their innocence in court.

> "Let a hundred **guilty** be **acquitted,** but one **innocent** should not be **convicted"**
>
> English Jurist Sir
> — William Blackstone

Conclusion

The desire for quick and fair justice is universal. The Constitution's Article 21 makes protecting life and personal liberty a fundamental State duty. Depriving anyone of this right requires a just, fair, and reasonable legal procedure.

3.5. HAPPINESS

Introduction

The Wellbeing Research Centre at the University of Oxford, in partnership with Gallup and the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network, published the annual **World Happiness Report (WHR), 2026**.

Key Highlights of the Report

- **Global Rankings:** Finland secured the top spot for the 9th consecutive year. **India rose slightly to 116th** (up from 118th in 2025).
- **Evaluation & Concerns:** While rankings depend on factors like income, social support, and freedom, the **report specifically warns** that heavy social media use is driving a significant decline in youth well-being and population-level mental health.

What is Happiness?

- Happiness is a multifaceted concept that holds different meanings across various cultures and individuals.
- **The World Happiness Report** measures it practically by asking individuals to evaluate their current lives on a **scale of 0 to 10 (the Cantril Ladder),** treating happiness as an overarching judgment of life quality.

Theoretical Frameworks of Happiness

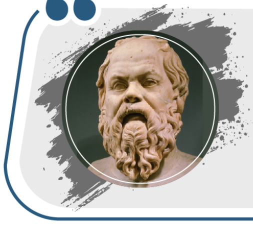
- **Upanishadic Tradition:** Happiness is **Ananda** (Bliss), which alongside existence (**Sat**) and consciousness (**Chit**), forms the ultimate reality **(Sat-Chit-Ananda).**
- **Classical Western (Aristotle):** Defines happiness as **Eudaimonia**, i.e., a flourishing life achieved through moral virtues, rational action, and social responsibility, rather than mere material pleasure.
- **Buddhism**: Ultimate happiness is **Nirvana**, a state of profound inner peace attained by overcoming worldly attachments and ending suffering.
- **Gross National Happiness (Bhutan):** A holistic, multi-dimensional measure of well-being that explicitly rejects purely materialistic economic metrics.
- **Utilitarianism (Jeremy Bentham):** Posits that the most ethical actions are those that maximize overall happiness for the greatest number of people.

Key Ethical Concerns behind India's WHR Ranking

- **Inequality & Justice:** Uneven wealth distribution violates principles of distributive justice **(Rawls).**
- **Trust Deficit:** Corruption and weak institutions undermine the ethical legitimacy of governance.
- **Social Fragmentation:** Rising individualism and social tensions weaken empathy and community bonds.
- **Mental Well-being Crisis:** Stress, unemployment, and heavy social media use compromise psychological dignity.

How Happiness can be promoted in India?

- **Ethical Governance:** Enhance transparency and reduce corruption to build institutional trust (e.g., Digital India, Direct Benefit Transfers).
- **Social Capital:** Foster community participation, mutual support, and social harmony (e.g., Self-Help Groups).
- **Inclusive Development:** Bridge inequality gaps and ensure last-mile delivery of services (e.g., Aspirational Districts Programme).



> "Happiness flows not from physical or external conditions, such as bodily pleasures or wealth and power, but from living a life that's right for your soul, your deepest good."
>
> **- Socrates**

- **Mental Health & Well-being:** Address psychological needs, stress, and depression alongside physical health (e.g., National Mental Health Programme).
- **Value-Based Education:** Cultivate empathy, ethics, and civic responsibility from a young age (e.g., NEP 2020 life skills curriculum).

Teaching Happiness in Schools

- **Key Initiatives:** Programs like the Delhi Happiness Curriculum (focused on mindfulness), UNESCO's Happy Schools framework (promoting joyful learning), and various Latin American well-being models prioritize emotional health over rote memorization.
- **Student Impact:** Integrating happiness into education improves focus and emotional regulation, reduces behavioral issues like bullying, and drives significant academic gains, creating a virtuous cycle between well-being and achievement.

Conclusion

The World Happiness Report 2026 underscores **happiness as the ultimate metric for ethical governance.** For India, it serves as a reminder that true development must be inclusive and compassionate, ensuring citizens lead dignified, meaningful lives beyond mere survival.

3.6. INTEGRAL HUMANISM (EKATMA MANAVVAD)

Introduction

Introduced in the mid-1960s by **Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya**, Integral Humanism (Ekatma Manav Darshan) provides an indigenous developmental framework for India. It remains a guiding philosophy today, emphasizing human dignity, harmony, and solidarity to build an equitable society.

Integral Humanism (Ekatma Manav Darshan)

- **Origin & Purpose:** Conceived as a uniquely Indian alternative to Western capitalist individualism and Marxist socialism. It aims to ensure a **dignified** life by **harmonizing** the **spiritual**, **social**, and **economic** aspects of humanity.
- **Core Concept:** Centered on the **Purusharthas**, the four cardinal goals of human life: Dharma (righteousness), Artha (prosperity), Kama (desire), and Moksha (liberation).
- **Foundational Principles**
  - **Primacy of the whole:** Balancing the needs of the individual with the society.
  - **Supremacy of Dharma:** Righteousness as the ultimate guiding force.
  - **Autonomy of Society:** Empowering the community over excessive state control.

Core Tenets of Integral Humanism in Contemporary Times

- **Cultural Nationalism (Bharatiyata):** Integrating indigenous knowledge and traditions with modern technological advancements.
- **Social Integration and Harmony:** Eradicating caste discrimination to build a society rooted in equality and justice.
- **Antyodaya (Upliftment of the Last):** Prioritizing the poorest and most marginalized in economic planning to achieve Economic Democracy (e.g., education and work for all).
- **Ethical Governance (Dharma Rajya):** Establishing a state driven by righteousness, moral values, and transparent governance.
- **Decentralization:** Empowering local communities through self-reliant, village-based economies tailored to their specific needs and resources.

Conclusion

Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya's Integral Humanism offers a uniquely Indian blueprint for holistic development. Rejecting the extremes of capitalism and socialism, it harmonizes material prosperity with spiritual well-being. Through **Antyodaya** and ethical governance, it reminds us that true progress is measured by human dignity and societal harmony.

3.7. KEY WORDS

Key Words			
Rawls' Difference Principle	Eudaimonia	Gandhi's Talisman	Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)
Distributive Justice	Ethical Dilemma	Rule of Law	Kant's Categorical Imperative

3.8. PRACTICE QUESTION

Answer Canvas		
The growing public support for 'instant justice' through police encounters and arbitrary demolitions reflects a deep-seated ethical crisis in governance and a loss of faith in the judicial process. Critically analyze the ethical issues involved and suggest a way forward to ensure ethical governance.		
Introduction: Start by clearly defining "instant justice" and identifying the core ethical conflict: the clash between retributive public demands and the constitutional rule of law, highlighting the breached social contract.	**Body:** Detail ethical dilemmas like means versus ends, bypassing due process, and prioritizing retributive over restorative justice. Explain systemic reasons like inordinate legal delays and sensationalized media driving this dangerous trend.	**Conclusion:** Conclude by emphasizing that justice must not only be done but seen to be done through fair procedures. Reiterate that constitutional morality and human dignity must guide all state actions.

फाउंडेशन कोर्स
सामान्य अध्ययन
प्रारंभिक एवं मुख्य परीक्षा 2027
इनोवेटिव क्लासरूम प्रोग्राम

- प्रारंभिक परीक्षा, मुख्य परीक्षा और निबंध के लिए महत्वपूर्ण सभी टॉपिक का विस्तृत कवरेज
- मौलिक अवधारणाओं की समझ के विकास एवं विश्लेषणात्मक क्षमता निर्माण पर विशेष ध्यान
- एनीमेशन, पॉवर प्वाइंट, वीडियो जैसी तकनीकी सुविधाओं का प्रयोग
- अंतर - विषयक समझ विकसित करने का प्रयास
- योजनाबद्ध तैयारी हेतु करेंट ओरिएंटेड अप्रोच
- नियमित क्लास टेस्ट एवं व्यक्तिगत मूल्यांकन
- प्री फाउंडेशन कक्षाएं
- सीसैट कक्षाएं
- PT 365 कक्षाएं
- MAINS 365 कक्षाएं
- PT टेस्ट सीरीज
- मुख्य परीक्षा टेस्ट सीरीज
- निबंध टेस्ट सीरीज
- सीसैट टेस्ट सीरीज
- निबंध लेखन - शैली की कक्षाएं
- करेंट अफेयर्स मैगजीन

नोट: ऑनलाइन छात्र हमारे पाठ्यक्रम की लाइव वीडियो कक्षाएं अपने घर पर ऑनलाइन प्लेटफॉर्म पर देख सकते हैं। छात्र लाइव चैट विकल्प के माध्यम से कक्षा के दौरान अपने संदेह और विषय संबंधी प्रश्न पूछ सकते हैं। वे अपने संदेह और प्रश्न नोट भी कर सकते हैं और दिल्ली केंद्र में हमारे कक्षा सलाहकार को बता सकते हैं और हम फोन/मेल के माध्यम से प्रश्नों का उत्तर देंगे।

Scan the QR CODE to download VISION IAS app

DELHI : 15 जुलाई, 8 AM
JAIPUR : 15 जुलाई, 3:30 PM

4. ETHICS & BUSINESS

4.1. ETHICS OF BUSINESS DOWNSIZING

Introduction

Companies like Microsoft, Google, Amazon, and IBM have laid off about 100,000 employees, driven by AI transformation, automation, and management restructuring. While aimed at productivity and competitiveness, such downsizing raises serious ethical concerns for employees and society.

> There is **one** and **only one** social **responsibility of business**—to use **its** resources and engage in activities designed to **increase its profits.**
>
> — **Milton Friedman**

About Business Ethics

- **Meaning:** Guides **individuals**, **firms**, and **corporate culture** in ethical conduct.
- **Features:** Based on **trust**, **integrity**, **equity**, **legality**, and **governance**.
- **Nature:** Beyond legal compliance; rooted in **moral values** and **societal welfare**.

Key Stakeholders and Their Interests	
Stakeholders	**Interests**
Employees	• Job security, fair compensation and humane treatment during restructuring or layoffs
Employers / Management	• Productivity enhancement through AI and automation • Cost optimization and competitiveness
Consumers	• Better, faster, and more innovative products/services enabled by AI
Government / Regulators	• Maintaining employment stability
Society/Community	• Inclusive growth and minimal unemployment shocks from automation

Ethical Dilemmas Involved in Business Downsizing

- **Utilitarianism vs. Kantian Capitalism:** Downsizing benefits the majority (**utilitarian**), but **Kant** rejects using employees as a means to an end.
- **Individualism vs. CSR:** Profit maximization justifies layoffs (**individualist view),** but conflicts with CSR, which values **employee welfare.**
- **Deontological vs. Teleological: Duty-based ethics** prioritize moral responsibility, while **consequentialism** focuses only on outcomes.
- **Ethical Relativism vs. Justice: Relativism** allows varying norms, but **justice** requires **fairness for all**.

Way Forward to Ethical Employment Practices

- **Last Resort:** Consider alternatives before layoffs; cut costs, freeze hiring, assess wider impacts.
- **Voluntary Layoffs:** Offer severance or career transition support.
- **Business Ethics:** Follow codes promoting **integrity**, **transparency**, and **compassion**. E.g., Starbucks offered health insurance to part-time workers (1988).
- **Agile Talent Strategy:** Invest in upskilling and career growth. E.g., Amazon's Education Benefit Programme.
- **Support Displaced Workers:** Help find new jobs via **networks** and **reskilling**. E.g., Nokia's Bridge Programme helped 60% laid-off staff (2014).

Conclusion

Downsizing must be the **last option**, preceded by **upskilling** and **ethical workforce management**. A culture of good business conduct through constant engagement and socialization should be promoted.

4.2. CELEBRITIES AND ENDORSEMENT OF PRODUCTS

Introduction

Enforcement Directorate (ED) charged many **celebrities**, including popular actors and TV hosts, for allegedly **promoting illegal betting apps,** violating gambling and money laundering laws.

Key Stakeholders and Their Interests

Stakeholders	Interests
Celebrities	• Seek **financial gain** and brand visibility. • Upholding the **highest ethical standards.**
Companies/Platforms	• **Maximising profits** and **market** reach. • **Respecting law of the land,** upholding corporate social responsibility, etc.
Government Agencies	• Enforcing laws, **protecting consumers**, preventing money laundering. • **Maintain trust in public systems** by curbing unlawful promotions.
Society at large (especially youth)	• Maintaining **informed decision-making** despite celebrity influence.

Key Ethical Issues in Celebrity Endorsement of Harmful Products

- **Conflict of Interest:** Lucrative contracts create a direct clash between personal wealth and public welfare, where profit motives eclipse individual integrity and ethical decision-making.
- **Deficit in Due Diligence:** Relying blindly on corporate claims without independent verification demonstrates a severe lack of accountability and willful **ethical blindness.**
- **Role-Model Integrity**: Exploiting society's deep-seated reverence for public figures to peddle deceptive goods manipulates public attitude and breaches their **fiduciary duty** as role models.
- **The Ethical Lag:** Rapid innovation in domains like crypto or betting outpaces statutory frameworks.
    - Celebrities wrongly equate the absence of explicit legal prohibition with ethical justification.
- **Crisis of External Accountability:** Resource-constrained regulators cannot monitor ubiquitous media. This proves that probity cannot rely on external policing alone; it demands robust industry self-regulation.

> With great power comes great responsibility.
>
> -Voltaire

Way Forward: An Ethical Paradigm for Endorsements

- **Voice of Conscience:** Celebrities must exercise an internal moral compass to **self-audit** products, transcending mere legal compliance to ensure responsible social influence.
- **Corporate Governance:** Brands must embrace **Conscious Capitalism,** prioritizing societal welfare and corporate social responsibility over pure profit-maximization.
- **Institutionalizing Accountability:** Strengthening laws as ethical guides through mandatory transparency norms and industry self-regulation to ensure systemic probity.
- **Cognitive Empowerment:** Fostering a rational, informed citizenry to act as a democratic check against deceptive marketing and the blind celebrity halo effect.
- **Collective Moral Duty:** Governance must transcend punitive measures, forging a social contract between the state, market, and society to prioritize truth and public well-being.

Conclusion

The profound influence of celebrities demands that ethical responsibility and public welfare take precedence over sheer financial gain. Curbing harmful endorsements requires strict regulations, corporate accountability, and self-auditing by public figures to protect consumers.

4.3. CONSCIOUS CAPITALISM

Introduction

Human civilisation has evolved from **mercantilism to financial capitalism**, to the present-day **emergence of powerful digital ecosystems** and **complex corporate structures**. Adoption of **conscious capitalism** has thus become crucial in the new age with futuristic revolution of Artificial Intelligence, renewable energy transitions, and the climate crisis, presenting varied risks, challenges, and opportunities.

Key Stakeholders and Their Interests	
Stakeholder	**Interests**
Corporate Leaders	• Acting as **trustees** of wealth for the wider community; balancing purpose, ethics, and sustainable long-term growth over purely extracting short-term profit.
Employees	• Benefiting from a supportive work environment, fair wages, opportunities for growth, and an inclusive organizational culture.
Consumers	• Supporting transparent, authentic, and accountable businesses whose products and operations align with their personal ethical values and sustainability goals.
Shareholders	• Achieving long-term viability and sustainable wealth (intellectual, social, and ecological) rather than just short-term quarterly returns.
Society	• Experiencing positive business externalities, inclusive development, social justice, and general welfare driven by corporate social responsibility.
The Environment	• Preservation through circular economic models, sustainable resource extraction, renewable energy transitions, and the prevention of ecological exploitation.
Supply Chain Partners	• Engaging in ethically sourced supply chains and ensuring fair pay and equitable treatment across business operations.

What is Conscious Capitalism?

- **Definition:** A **philosophy** balancing financial success with **purpose, ethics, and stakeholder** value to benefit everyone involved.
- **Core Ethics & Values:** Business Ethics forms the foundation of Conscious capitalism**.**
    - Driven by fairness, truth, and universal welfare, it prioritizes long-term value creation, environmental sustainability, and social responsibility.

Indian Philosophical Ideas Aligning with Conscious Capitalism

- **Purushartha**: Wealth accumulation (Artha) must always be guided by moral righteousness and duty (Dharma).
- **Gandhian Trusteeship**: Business owners act as trustees managing wealth for the wider community, not absolute proprietors.
- **Inclusive Development**: Promotes **Antyodaya** (welfare of the last person) and Sarvodaya (universal upliftment).

What are the key differences between Traditional and Conscious Capitalism?

Parameters	Traditional Capitalism	Conscious Capitalism
Basic Tenet	• Individual and private property rights. • Free Trade.	• Founded on basic tenet of capitalism. • Along with incorporating **social justice.**
Profit Focus	• **Profit Maximisation** • Cost cutting, Reduced wages, Neglecting environment, etc.	• Considers **Broader impact** of actions. • Focuses on planet and people. • Sustainable Business Model.
Long-Term Sustainability	• Priority to **short term goals.** • **Exploiting resources** without considering **future consequences.**	• **Long-term viability** (integrating ethical practices into business). • Sustainable Resources and Community Welfare.

Approach towards CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility)	Acts as **satellite program.** **Detached** from company's culture and roots.	**Social justice** woven into **fibre of business.** **Way of doing business.**

Why is Conscious Capitalism Gaining Momentum in Present Times?

- **Promotion of Ethical Business Practices:** Positions companies as a force for good; businesses have ethical obligations to humanity and their environments.
- **Realisation of True Nature of Capitalism:** Pursuit of profits and wealth maximisation for the benefit of few has created disparities with poor outcomes.
- **Changing Consumer Preferences:** Consumers are increasingly integrating ethical values with purchasing decisions.
- **Transparency Era:** Corporate actions are constantly under scrutiny and companies must operate with authenticity and accountability.
- **Long-Term Value Creation:** Increased focus on purpose and stakeholders creates sustainable competitive advantages.
- **Contemporary Developments:** Rapid adoption of Artificial Intelligence and renewable energy transitions has raised concerns about ethical impacts.

> The **longest journey** that people must take is the **eighteen inches** between their heads and their hearts.
>
> **– John E. Mackey**

Key Challenges in Applying Conscious Capitalism Practices				
Goal Alignment: Short-term financial pressures often conflict with long-term, purpose-driven initiatives.	**Cultural Shift:** Transforming organizational culture demands significant time and universal commitment.	**Impact Measurement:** Quantifying social and environmental progress remains complex and difficult.	**Risk of Greenwashing and Woke-Washing:** Progressive branding can be misused as a marketing shield to hide unchanged, extractive operations.	**Stakeholder Resistance:** Traditional, profit-centric industries may reject these changes.

Applying Conscious Capitalism to Business Ethics

- **Ethical Profit:** Ensure business activities create positive impacts like environmental sustainability and local economic development.
- **Supportive Environment:** Offer fair wages and growth opportunities to build loyalty, productivity, and an inclusive culture.
- **Adaptable Growth:** Prioritize slow, sustainable growth over quick gains that require ethical compromises like exploiting labor.
- **Socially Responsible Investing (SRI):** Practice values-based investing by avoiding companies with questionable practices.
- **Purpose-Driven Leadership:** Shift from traditional management to an empathetic approach focused on ethical decision-making.

Conscious Capitalism: Best Practices

- **Starbucks:** Relies on **objective third-party evaluators** to ensure that all of its coffee is **ethically sourced** and that **farmers receive fair pay.**
- **Reliance Industries Limited (RIL):** Committed to invest Rs 75,000 crore in three years towards the **"Green Vision" plan.**
- **Tata Group**: Embraced the concept of **businesses with a conscience, adopts** a set of **core values** that guide its decision-making and actions like respect for individuals, integrity, and excellence.

Conclusion

While new developments in AI age would **fundamentally change human relations, global partnerships, and international trade**, yet Indian initiatives like **Atmanirbhar Bharat, Viksit Bharat, Make in India, Start Up India, Net Zero 2070 vision** stand as a test of time and can be regarded as a torchbearer of conscious capitalism, to foster future peace and sustainability.

4.4. KEY WORDS

Key Words			
Voice of Conscience	Sarvodaya	Virtue Ethics	Deontological Ethics
Trusteeship	Utilitarianism	Fiduciary Duty	Conflict of Interest

4.5. PRACTICE QUESTION

Answer Canvas		
In the contemporary business environment, the pursuit of profit often conflicts with corporate social responsibility, leading to ethical dilemmas like mass layoffs and unethical endorsements. How can the philosophy of 'Conscious Capitalism' help resolve these dilemmas? Discuss with examples.		
Introduction: Begin by defining Conscious Capitalism as a philosophy balancing financial success with stakeholder welfare. Briefly highlight the contemporary context of ethical dilemmas, like mass downsizing and deceptive celebrity product endorsements.	**Body:** Outline ethical conflicts in corporate downsizing and harmful endorsements. Explain how Conscious Capitalism resolves these by prioritizing stakeholder welfare over shareholder primacy, using examples like Tata Group and sustainable business.	**Conclusion:** Conclude that integrating ethical business frameworks remains essential for future survival. Highlight how Indian philosophies, such as Gandhian Trusteeship, align with these goals to ensure global sustainability and lasting peace.

Lakshya
MAINS MENTORING PROGRAM 2026
35 Days Expert Intervention
A Strategic Revision, Practice, and Mentoring Program for UPSC Prelims Examination
5 JULY 2026
Highly experienced and qualified team of Mentors for continuous support and guidance
A structured plan of revision for GS Prelims, CSAT, and Current Affairs
Effective Utilization of learning resources, including PYQs, Quick Revision Modules (QRMs), and PT-365

Lakshya
PRELIMS & MAINS INTEGRATED MENTORING PROGRAM
Lakshya Prelims & Mains Integrated Mentoring Program 2027
(A Strategic Revision, Practice, and Mentoring Program for UPSC Prelims and Mains Examination 2026)
VisionIAS introduces the Lakshya Prelims & Mains Integrated Mentoring Programme 2027, offering unified guidance for UPSC aspirants across both stages, ensuring comprehensive support and strategic preparation for success
2027 | 14 MONTHS | 1 JULY
Highlights of the Program
- Coverage of the entire UPSC Prelims and Mains Syllabus
- Development of Advanced answer writing skills
- Highly experienced and qualified team of senior mentors
- Special emphasis to Essay & Ethics

5. ETHICS AND MEDIA

5.1. SOCIAL MEDIA AND CIVIL SERVANTS

Introduction

"Don't fall into the 'Singham' trap. The uniform inspires pride, not awe," warned the Prime Minister regarding civil servants becoming Instagram celebrities (often dubbed the **Insta Babu** culture). While some officials use their reach for positive civic action, the shift from public service communication to personal branding prompted strict regulatory pushback across the Indian bureaucracy.

Civil Servants have been using Social Media these days for various purposes such as:

- **Connecting with citizens** to increase public participation, build trust, and increase popularity.
- **Sharing information** and improving awareness regarding government schemes, latest policy updates, regulations etc. E.g., Delhi Traffic Police increasing traffic law awareness through memes.
- **Understanding public viewpoint** on policies and programmes and underlying issues like casteism, communalism, and sexism among others.
- **For expressing personal opinion** and sharing other content.

Key Stakeholders and Their Interests

Stakeholders	Interests
Civil Servants	• De facto **representatives of the government** and at the same time **right to freedom of speech and expression** as a citizen.
Government	• Set **policies, guidelines, and standards** for civil servants' social media usage.
Citizens/Public	• **Audiences and recipients of the information** shared by civil servants and may actively participate by **commenting, asking questions, or seeking assistance** through social media channels.
Media	• **Monitor and report** on civil servants' social media activities, amplifying their reach and impact.
Colleagues/Peers	• Follow and **engage with their peers' social media activities** to exchange ideas, share best practices, or coordinate efforts.
Regulatory Bodies	• Monitoring and ensuring **compliance with social media usage guidelines** or policies.

Ethical Issues Arising out of Social Media use by Civil Servants

- **Principle of Neutrality and Anonymity:** Civil Service values suggest that officers be politically neutral and must keep themselves away from being recognized publicly or appreciated for that matter.
- **Inconsistent with the parliamentary form of government**: Bureaucrats are not directly accountable to the public but only accountable to their line of authority.
- **Violation of confidentiality and threat to national security**: Risk of information leakage, personal data shared online can be used for intelligence gathering, etc.
- **It can blur the distinction between an individual's professional and private identity:** Actions online are easily visible to colleagues, employers, and the general public.
- **Undue self-promotion**: Many Civil Servants post about their work. These posts are then promoted by their fans and followers, creating a public narrative of their performance.

All India Services (Conduct) Rules, 1968

It highlights that **no member of the services should make a statement on any public media-**

- Which has the effect of an adverse criticism of any current or recent policy or action of the Central Government or a State Government?

- Which is capable of embarrassing the relations between the Central Government and any State Government; and between Central Government and Government of any Foreign State.

Way Forward (Suggestion by the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology for social media**)

- **Identity**: **Civil Servants must clearly mention their identity, their role in the department** and publish information in the first person. A disclaimer may be used when appropriate.
- **Authority**: **Do not comment and respond unless authorized to do so,** especially in matters that are sub-judice, draft legislations or relating to other individuals.
- **Relevance**: Comment on issues **associated with their area** and **make relevant** and **pertinent comments**.
- **Professionalism**: **Be Polite, Be Discrete and Be Respectful to all** and do not make personal comments for or against any individuals or agencies.
- **Compliance**: Be compliant with relevant rules and regulations. Do not infringe upon IPR, Copyright of others.
- **Privacy**: **Not to reveal personal information** about other individuals as well as self.

> **If you just set out to be liked,** you would be prepared to **compromise** on **anything at any time.**
>
> **— Margaret Thatcher**

Conclusion

Social media can enhance public engagement by civil servants, but must be **used with caution** to uphold neutrality, confidentiality, and professionalism. A balanced, responsible approach is the key to maintaining trust and integrity in public service.

5.2. OBSCENITY ON DIGITAL PLATFORMS

Introduction

Addressing controversies in digital comedy like India's Got Latent, the Supreme Court directed the government to curb online vulgarity while protecting free speech. In response, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting proposed the Draft IT Rules in early 2026, mandating age-based classifications and strict limits on explicit language, nudity, and offensive themes across digital platforms.

Key Stakeholders and Their Interests	
Stakeholders	**Interests**
Content Creators & Artists	• **Maintain creative freedom** and **artistic expression**, **generate income** and build audience.
Digital Platform	• Ensure their **revenue model follows laws of the land** and protect users from harmful content without excessive censorship. • **Maintain advertiser trust to avoid revenue loss** as brands may withdraw if platform is associated with questionable content.
Government & Regulatory Bodies	• **Define and enforce laws** on online content, balancing free speech with public morality.
Society at large	• **Access desired content with minimal restriction**, Avoid exposure to unwanted obscene material particularly for children. • **Maintain agency in content consumption choices.**

Need for Regulating Obscenity on Digital Platforms

- **Preserving Cultural Values:** Unchecked obscene content weakens moral character and fosters disrespect (e.g., the 2021 Bulli Bai app incident targeting women).

- **Protecting Human Dignity:** Kantian ethics assert that humans must never be treated as mere means to an end.
- **Preventing Social Harm:** J.S. Mill's Harm Principle suggests freedom of expression should be restricted if it causes direct societal harm.
- **Platform Accountability:** Digital platforms have an ethical duty to balance free speech with societal well-being and user safety.
- **Constitutional Morality:** Article 19(2) establishes that free speech is not absolute, allowing reasonable restrictions on grounds of decency, public order, and morality.

> Censorship reflects a society's lack of confidence in itself. It is a hallmark of an authoritarian regime.
>
> **— Potter Stewart, U.S. Supreme Court Judge**

Ethical Issues in Regulating Obscene Digital Content

- **Censorship vs. Restrictions:** Over-regulation stifles creativity and limits diverse perspectives. Subjective rules risk arbitrary actions, like the 2024 ban of 18 OTT platforms.
- **Evolving Social Norms:** Obscenity is a fluid cultural construct. Ancient Khajuraho sculptures are celebrated art, yet similar modern expressions face strict censorship.
- **Agency and Paternalism:** Balancing user protection with personal autonomy. Excessive regulation infantilizes adult users by assuming they cannot make informed media choices.
- **Artistic Freedom:** The tension between public morality and creative expression. As ruled in the M.F. Hussain case, nudity alone does not constitute obscenity.

Conflict between Ethics and Law of Banning Content with Obscenity

Balancing legal restrictions with evolving ethical standards presents a complex challenge due to two main factors:

- **Vague Legal Framework**
    - Multiple laws including the BNS, IT Act, IT Rules 2021 (which mandate age ratings), and Cinematograph Act, regulate explicit content.
    - However, **obscenity** lacks an explicit definition in criminal law or the Constitution, leading to highly subjective interpretation and inconsistent enforcement.
- **Evolving Judicial Interpretation**
    - Judicial understanding has shifted over time. In **Ranjit D. Udeshi (1964)**, the Supreme Court applied the strict **Hicklin test**, defining obscenity by its **tendency to deprave and corrupt.**
    - In **Aveek Sarkar (2014)**, the Court modernized its approach to the **community standards test**, based on contemporary norms. However, these standards are difficult to define as they vary widely across regions.
    - Further highlighting this subjectivity, **Justice (retired) Gautam Patel of the Bombay High Court** has stated that mere profanity does not automatically constitute obscenity.

Way Forward for Digital Content Regulation

- **Justice & Objectivity:** Define **clear and consistent** obscenity guidelines that consider **India's cultural diversity** to avoid **bias or subjective judicial rulings**.
- **Accountability & Responsibility:** Introduce a **Broadcasting Bill** to regulate **OTT content, digital news, and emerging technologies**, ensuring **ethical and socially responsible media**.
- **Encouraging Ethical Content Creation:** To ensure social responsibility & cultural sensitivity, promote **self-regulation** and ethical storytelling that reflects **societal values and cultural respect**.
- **Empowerment & Informed Choice:** Implement **digital literacy programs** to **educate youth** on **media ethics, responsible viewing, and online safety**.

Conclusion

Obscenity is highly subjective, **varying across cultures and time**. Therefore, creating a responsible digital media space requires **legal clarity, self-regulation, public awareness, and global cooperation**. By upholding ethical values such as **justice, dignity, transparency, and accountability**, digital platforms can strike a balance between **creative freedom and social responsibility**.

5.3. MEDIA ETHICS AND SELF-REGULATION

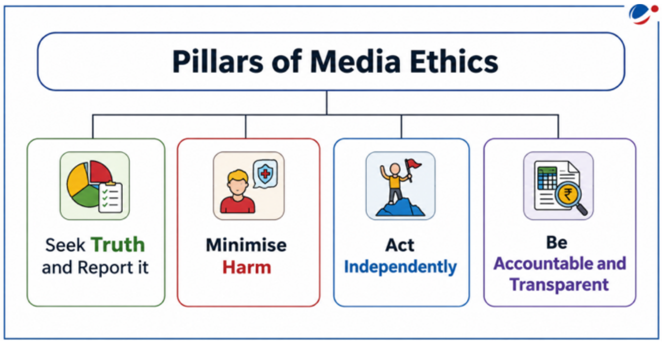
Introduction

The rise of digital media sharpens the **ethical conflict between free speech and public order**. Recent State interventions, including the November 2025 Ministry of Information and Broadcasting advisory against broadcasting unverified footage and the March 2026 Draft IT Rules extending the Code of Ethics to user-generated news, demand media accountability. This regulatory shift necessitates robust self-regulation to balance journalistic liberties with societal responsibility.

Key Stakeholders and Their Interests	
Stakeholders	**Interests**
Media actors	• Media ethics must ensure that journalists observe principles of **integrity, professionalism, privacy and impartiality.** • **Ensuring autonomy** of media through the mechanism of Self-regulation.
Government	• Media ethics promotes and defends values such as a **universal respect for life and the rule of law and legality.**
General Public	• Serve the public by providing information which **is impartial** and which promotes **knowledge and reason.**
Police	• Media must **facilitate assistance to the police** and it must applaud when criminals are brought to justice as a result. ○ The press must also **hold the police to account, acting as the eyes and ears of the public.**

The Urgent Case for Media Accountability

- **Confidentiality and Integrity**: Serious ethical concerns have been expressed where reporters covered special stories based on information concerning an **individual's personal conduct** in **private life.**
- **Bias and subjectivity:** News reports are often reported in a **particular style, and bias in a manner** that has led to the suspicion of the news media's intentions and objects.
  - **Cross-media ownership by big corporate companies** has assumed alarming proportions.
- **Current self-regulatory mechanism has not been effective** due to reasons like-
  - **Media and market pressure: Business imperatives** of increasing revenue have taken (and continue to take) their toll on **journalistic excellence.**
  - **Inadequate penalty:** Currently, ₹ 1 Lakh fine is ineffective as this fine is not in proportion to profits earned.



Strengthening Media Accountability: The Way Forward

- **Self-regulation system** of media needs strengthening.
  - **Hutchins Commission report** advocated for **freedom of the press, self-regulation** was considered the key feature, and **government intervention as the last resort.**
  - **Penalties should be in proportion** to the profits earned by an errant channel**.**

> The media could not be **policed from without** and had to be **policed from within.**
>
> — Tom Clancy

- There should be **a universal code of ethics** which specifies the following guidelines for journalists**:**
  - **Never deliberately distort facts or context,** including visual information.
  - Recognise a special obligation to serve as **watchdogs over public affairs and government.**
  - **Objectivity** is an essential technique for removing bias in seeking truth.

Conclusion

In an era of widespread misinformation and media polarization, **a robust and accountable ethical framework is essential** to preserve public trust. Strengthening self-regulation, ensuring proportionate penalties, and upholding core journalistic values like objectivity, accuracy, and integrity are vital to safeguard the credibility and democratic role of the media.

5.4. KEY WORDS

Key Words			
Objectivity	Anonymity	Morality	Dignity
Neutrality	Professionalism	Justice	Impartiality

5.5. PRACTICE QUESTIONS

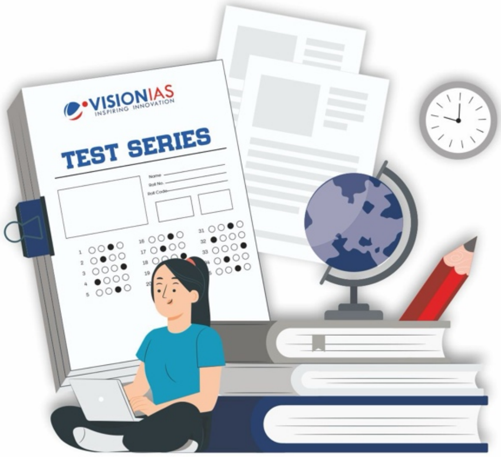
Answer Canvas		
The increasing use of social media by civil servants often blurs the line between public service communication and personal branding. In the context of this emerging culture, discuss the ethical issues involved. Suggest a framework for responsible digital behaviour by bureaucrats.		
Introduction: Start by defining the issue. Highlight the shift from using digital platforms for citizen engagement to seeking personal popularity, contradicting the traditional bureaucratic principle of anonymity.	**Body:** Discuss ethical breaches like compromised neutrality, confidentiality risks, and undue self-promotion. Then, suggest the Government framework prioritizing authorized, professional, and relevant communication over political commentary and personal branding.	**Conclusion:** Conclude that while social media enhances participatory governance, civil servants must balance digital accessibility with strict adherence to professional integrity, maintaining public trust over fleeting internet fame.

ALL INDIA PRELIMS TEST SERIES

Get the Benefit of Innovative Assessment System from the leader in the Test Series Program

- **General Studies** (हिन्दी माध्यम में भी उपलब्ध)
- **CSAT** (हिन्दी माध्यम में भी उपलब्ध)
  - VISION IAS Post Test Analysis™
  - Flexible Timings
  - ONLINE Student Account to write tests and Performance Analysis
  - All India Ranking
  - Expert support - Email / Telephonic Interaction
  - Monthly Current Affairs

2027 | ENGLISH MEDIUM 5 JULY | हिन्दी माध्यम 5 जुलाई



Scan QR code for instant personalized mentoring

6. ETHICS AND TECHNOLOGY

6.1. ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) & ETHICS

Introduction

AI is rapidly transforming our world, yet its **unchecked advancement brings profound ethical and regulatory complexities.** Left unregulated, AI threatens digital equity and societal fairness through biased algorithms, privacy intrusions, Big-Tech monopolies, and copyright infringements.

Key Stakeholders and their Interests	
Stakeholders	**Interests**
Users	• Exploring new opportunities and applications of AI • Concerned about the **privacy** of their data, the **accuracy** of the system's predictions and the **potential for the system's bias**.
Developers	• Developing AI models that are ethical by embedding fairness, diversity, and essential safeguards • Enhance public trust and utility of AI
Investors	• Provide **financial support** for the development of the AI system.
State and Regulators	• Enact adequate **laws and regulations,** governing the development and use of AI systems.
Businesses & Enterprises	• Productivity gains, automation, cost reduction, competitive advantage.
Civil Society Organizations	• Advocate for the **responsible development** and **use of AI** systems.

Ethical Issues and Vulnerabilities of Artificial Intelligence

- **Privacy Intrusion & Mass Surveillance:** Without robust algorithmic safeguards, AI accelerates unchecked data harvesting and systemic surveillance**.**
  - **For instance,** deploying facial recognition for biometric profiling strips individuals of anonymity, fundamentally violating civil liberties.
- **Manipulation & Synthetic Media:** Deepfakes and AI-generated audio impersonations weaponize synthetic media to distort reality. This malicious fabrication **threatens democratic discourse** by accelerating the spread of hyper-realistic disinformation.
- **Embedded Bias & Discrimination:** Models trained on historically flawed datasets institutionalize and amplify systemic prejudices.
  - For example, predictive policing algorithms frequently profile marginalized communities disproportionately, effectively hardwiring societal bigotry into automated enforcement.
- **Algorithmic Opaqueness:** Many advanced AI models are **black boxes**, making their decision-making processes opaque. This lack of transparency hinders the identification of biases or errors
- **Accountability & Responsibility**: Determining who is responsible when an AI system makes a mistake or causes harm (designer, developer, deployer, user) is challenging, especially for autonomous systems.
  - E.g., an AI medical diagnostic tool providing a wrong diagnosis.
- **Erosion of Human agency:** Increasing reliance on autonomous AI systems may lead to **delegation of critical decision-making**, reducing human control.
- **Copyright and Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Infringement:** Using creators' works without consent (**e.g.,** AI models scrape books, music, art pieces, code, etc. for AI training).

MAINS 365 – ETHICS

Conclusion

The true measure of AI's progress lies not in its intelligence but in its adherence to ethical values. A governance framework rooted in transparency, accountability, justice, and human dignity is essential to ensure that AI serves humanity rather than undermines it.

6.1.1. NATIONAL SECURITY, AI & ETHICS

Introduction

The U.S. military has partnered with OpenAI for classified defense networks after Anthropic declined due to ethical and safety concerns. A similar scenario may soon unfold in India as private firms increasingly drive rapid AI integration within the defense sector.

Ethical values upheld by Anthropic

- **Trustworthiness:** By refusing to sign deal, the company showed its commitment to protecting **individuals' data** from **potential misuse**, thereby **reinforcing public confidence**.
- **Courage:** The willingness to take a principled stand against government pressure despite potential financial and strategic costs.
- **Non-maleficence:** It has avoided harm by refusing partnership in applications that could enable misuse or rights violations.

Key Ethical Dilemmas regarding AI & National Security

- **National Security vs. Moral Responsibility:** Choosing between state interests and corporate integrity (e.g., Anthropic refusing lucrative deals to uphold its values).
- **Utilitarianism vs. Rights-Based Ethics:** Weighing the collective security benefits of defense AI against the risk of violating individual human rights.
- **Duty vs. Consequence Ethics:** Determining if privacy breaches are justified for the greater good. OpenAI favored security outcomes (consequentialist), while Anthropic adhered to strict moral boundaries (deontological).

> Science without conscience is the ruin of the soul.
>
> **– François Rabelais**

- **Corporate Autonomy vs. State Control:** The tension between a private company's right to govern its technology and government mandates.
- **Surveillance vs. Liberty:** Deploying advanced AI in defense networks risks enabling mass surveillance and eroding personal freedoms.

Conclusion

As AI becomes central to warfare, balancing national security with ethical responsibility is crucial. This requires robust frameworks ensuring accountability, transparency, and human oversight to protect fundamental rights.

6.1.2. BIG TECH & AI: A GROWING REGULATORY CHALLENGE

Introduction

AI, driven by a handful of Big Tech firms, is transforming economies and societies. However, concerns over monopolies, copyright disputes, algorithmic bias, and AI-enabled deepfakes have intensified calls for stronger regulation to ensure ethical, transparent, and accountable innovation.

Key Issues in Regulation of AI

- **Innovation Gatekeeping**: Decisions about the development of AI are overwhelmingly in the hands of the big tech companies.

- **Global and Borderless Nature**: AI systems operate across jurisdictions, while regulation remains largely national, leading to coordination gaps.
- **Intense Corporate Influence**: Big Tech companies possess immense lobbying power and vast resources, often allowing them to resist or delay regulatory oversight.
- **Balancing Innovation vs Regulation:** Over-regulation may stifle innovation, while under-regulation may lead to harm—creating a policy dilemma.
  - Moreover, Regulatory frameworks move too slowly to keep up with rapid technological advancements, leaving laws outdated upon passing.

Initiatives taken For AI Regulation

India

- **Laws and Rules: IT Act, 2000 & IT Rules, 2021:** Due diligence by platforms (remove illegal content, grievance redressal); non-compliance causes loss of safe harbour (shields social platforms from user liability).
  - **Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023:** Consent-based data use; data protection & grievance mechanisms by data fiduciaries
  - **Rights-based Laws:** Laws such as Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, POCSO ban obscene/abusive content, especially involving women & children.
- **India AI Governance Guidelines (MeitY):** Safe and trusted AI governance; 7 sutras.
- **Approach to AI development:** M.A.N.A.V. for Human-centric AI

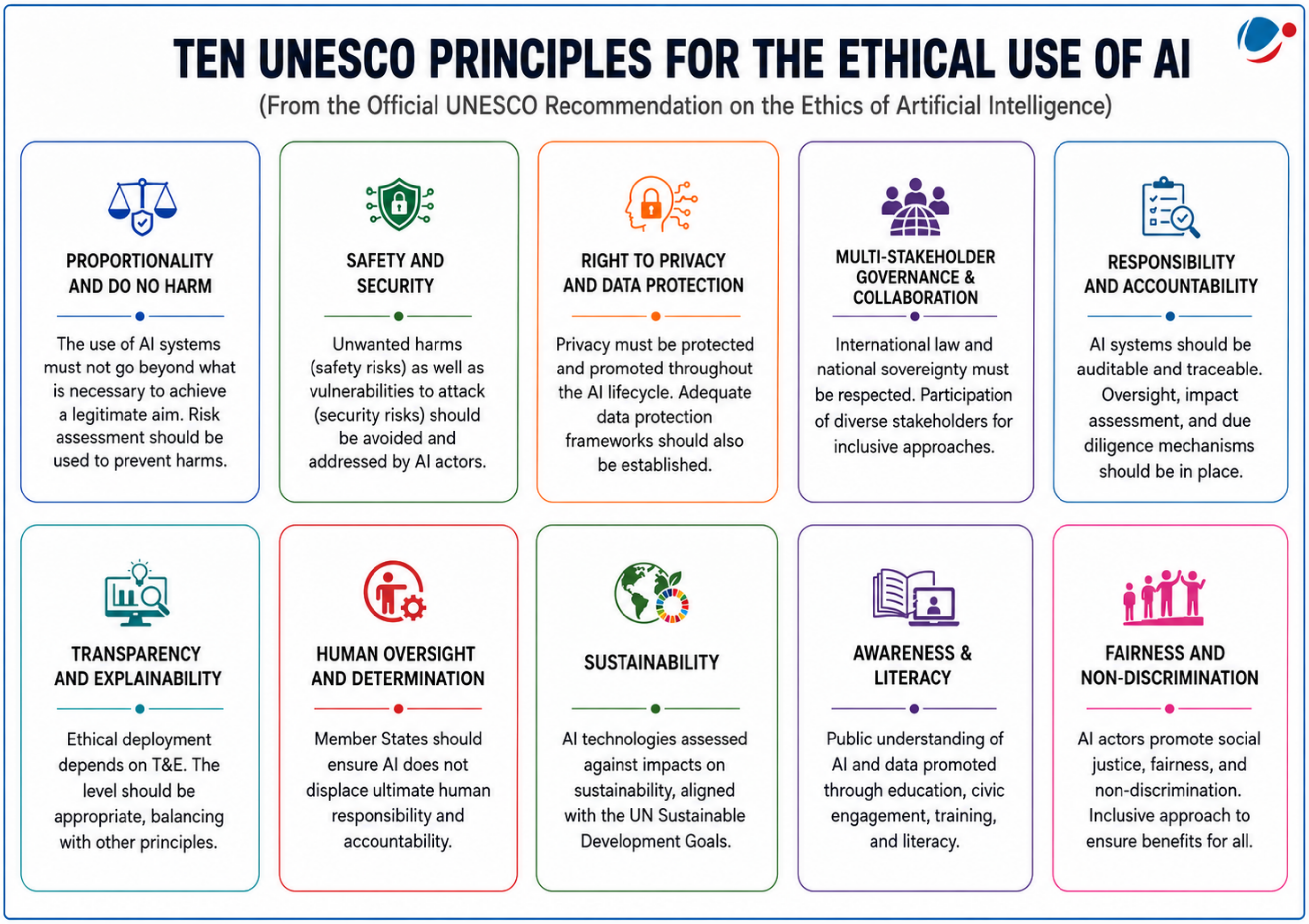
Global

- **UNESCO Recommendation on AI Ethics (2021)**: Calls for **human rights-centered AI**, transparency, accountability, etc.
- **OECD AI Principles (2019)**: Emphasize fairness, transparency, robustness, and accountability.
- **EU AI Act (2024)**: Risk-based rules, banning harmful uses requiring strict oversight for high-risk systems.
- **UNGA Initiative**: Independent International Scientific Panel on Artificial Intelligence, etc.
- **Key Conferences: Global Partnership on AI (GPAI)**; **Bletchley Park AI Safety Summit (UK, 2023); India AI Impact Summit (New Delhi, 2026)**-Emphasized **People, Planet, Progress**; and Global South governance, etc.

Way Forward: Building an Ethical and Equitable AI Paradigm

- **Strengthening Legal Frameworks**: Enact a **comprehensive AI law,** aligned with **global standards like the EU's AI Act,** addressing consent, licensing, IPR, liability, and accountability in AI training and deployment.
- **Promoting Fair Use and Compensation**: Create a **fair data licensing regime** to ensure creators (writers, musicians, coders) are credited and compensated.
- **Ensuring Competition and Preventing Monopolies**:
  - Empower the **Competition Commission of India** to monitor AI markets for anti-competitive practices.
  - Promote **open-source AI models** and **public data commons** to counter big tech monopolies.
- **Safeguarding Privacy and Sensitive Data**: Mandate **data anonymization, consent-based access, and independent audits** for AI firms. Enforce **strong penalties for privacy breaches** and data misuse.
- **Democratizing Knowledge and Access**:
  - Protect **public digital goods** like open research databases.
  - Promote **AI literacy programs** to empower citizens.
- **Balancing Corporate Profit with Ethical Responsibility**: Establish **Ethics Review Boards** within AI firms, akin to medical ethics committees.
- **Global Treaty**:
  - Advocate for a **global treaty on AI governance under the UN** for equitable benefit-sharing.
  - Foster **South-South cooperation** on AI research, open datasets, and digital infrastructure.
- **Building Institutional Capacity in India**:
  - Create a **National AI Regulation Authority** to coordinate across sectors.
  - Encourage **public-private partnerships** for ethical indigenous AI development.

- Strengthening AI Governance through **Techno-Legal Framework such** as **Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)**, Red Teaming, AI Firewalls, etc.



TEN UNESCO PRINCIPLES FOR THE ETHICAL USE OF AI

(From the Official UNESCO Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence)

PROPORTIONALITY AND DO NO HARM

The use of AI systems must not go beyond what is necessary to achieve a legitimate aim. Risk assessment should be used to prevent harms.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

Unwanted harms (safety risks) as well as vulnerabilities to attack (security risks) should be avoided and addressed by AI actors.

RIGHT TO PRIVACY AND DATA PROTECTION

Privacy must be protected and promoted throughout the AI lifecycle. Adequate data protection frameworks should also be established.

MULTI-STAKEHOLDER GOVERNANCE & COLLABORATION

International law and national sovereignty must be respected. Participation of diverse stakeholders for inclusive approaches.

RESPONSIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

AI systems should be auditable and traceable. Oversight, impact assessment, and due diligence mechanisms should be in place.

TRANSPARENCY AND EXPLAINABILITY

Ethical deployment depends on T&E. The level should be appropriate, balancing with other principles.

HUMAN OVERSIGHT AND DETERMINATION

Member States should ensure AI does not displace ultimate human responsibility and accountability.

SUSTAINABILITY

AI technologies assessed against impacts on sustainability, aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

AWARENESS & LITERACY

Public understanding of AI and data promoted through education, civic engagement, training, and literacy.

FAIRNESS AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

AI actors promote social justice, fairness, and non-discrimination. Inclusive approach to ensure benefits for all.

Conclusion

Generative AI's potential must be balanced with strong regulation, ethical innovation, and global cooperation to prevent monopolies, protect creators, and ensure equitable benefits.

6.2. ETHICS OF NEURO-TECH REVOLUTION

Introduction

Brain or Neuro technology is redefining what it means to interact with the nervous system. The field is expanding rapidly, driven by breakthroughs in artificial intelligence, wireless implants, and minimally invasive surgical techniques. Alongside unprecedented therapeutic benefits, this technological revolution introduces new ethical and legal challenges, particularly around mental privacy, data rights, and cognitive autonomy.

What is Neuro-technology?

- **About**: It **enables direct interaction between the human nervous system including the brain and digital or mechanical systems**. E.g., Brain-computer interfaces (BCIs)
- **Mechanism**: These systems operate by **detecting neural signals,** interpreting them using algorithms, and translating them into commands for devices such as prosthetics, computers, or communication interfaces.
- **Regulation & Usage:** Strictly regulated in medicine but **largely unregulated commercially**; consumer devices collect sensitive neural data often without consent.

Key Stakeholders and Their Interests	
Stakeholder	**Interests**
Patients & Persons with Disabilities	• Mobility, speech, memory restoration; pain relief; improved quality of life
Medical Professionals & Neuroscientists	• Scientific progress; professional recognition
Tech Companies & Start-ups	• Innovation leadership; data ownership; profits; market dominance
Governments & Regulators	• Public safety; national security
Military & Strategic Security Establishments	• Cognitive enhancement for soldiers; brain–controlled weapons

Ethical Issues with Neurotechnology

- **Threat to Privacy and Freedom of Thoughts:** BCIs could influence decisions threatening personal identity and autonomy.
- **Monetization of Neural Data**: Corporations could collect and commercialize brain data.
- **Surveillance and Dual-use Risks:** Technologies developed for rehabilitation can be repurposed for military or intelligence applications.

Way Forward (UNESCO's 2025 Key Recommendation on the Ethics of Neurotechnology)

- **Cognitive Liberty and Mental Privacy:** Individuals must retain self-determination over their own mental experiences and unauthorized collection, or use of neural data must be prohibited.
- **Human Agency and Accountability:** Neuro-devices must remain under user control ("humans in the loop").
- **Protection of Vulnerable Populations:** Especially children, who may not consent meaningfully.
- **Transparency and Explainability:** Users must understand device functions, risks, and data practices.
- **Non-discrimination and Inclusion:** Prevent unequal access and neuro-based social stratification in lower-middle-income countries and marginalized groups to prevent a **digital divide**.
- **Governance and Regulatory Frameworks:** Neurotechnology not to be used for surveillance and to compel individuals to testify against themselves.
    - **Assessment Mechanisms** (on human rights, economic, etc.); **Regulatory Sandboxes** (for testing and validating technologies) to be developed by the state.
    - States should classify neural data and data allowing mental inferences as **sensitive personal data.**

Conclusion

Neuro-technology offers transformative medical benefits but raises profound ethical risks. However, at the same time, ensuring mental privacy, human autonomy, equity, and strong global regulation is essential to harness innovation responsibly while safeguarding dignity and fundamental rights.

6.3. EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN THE AGE OF AI

Introduction

As AI automates cognitive tasks and redefines work, its inability to understand emotions makes human Emotional Intelligence (EI) indispensable today.

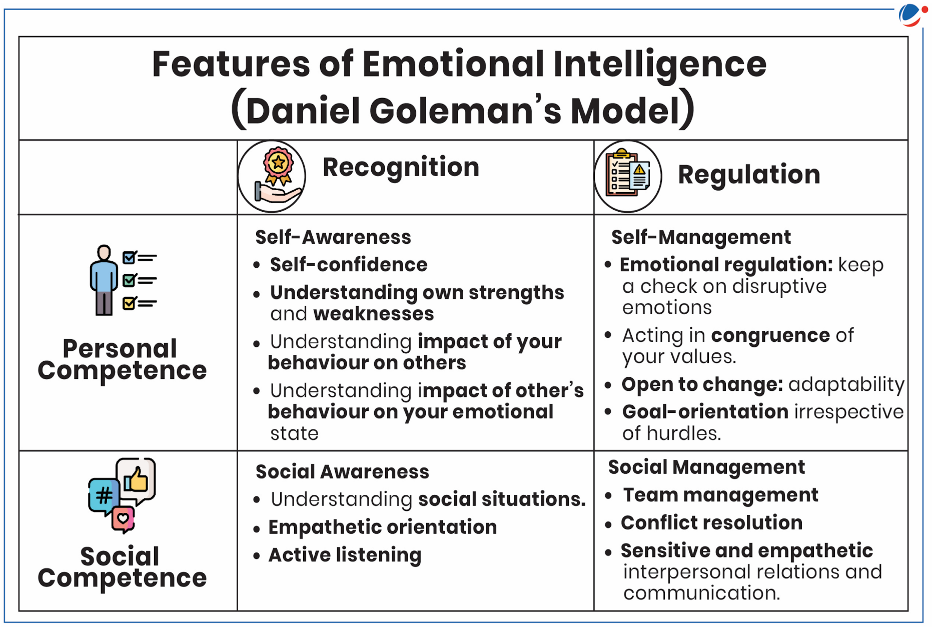
Understanding Emotional Intelligence (EI)

Emotional Intelligence is the ability to recognize, comprehend, manage, and influence the emotions of self and others.

- **Core Utility:** High EI strengthens interpersonal skills, facilitates conflict management, and develops non-cognitive traits such as grit, perseverance, and ethical reasoning.
- **Holistic Development:** It forms the bedrock of emotional resilience, allowing individuals to navigate high-stress environments without compromising their values or mental well-being.

The Contemporary Paradox of the AI Age

- **The Automation of Cognitive Intelligence:** Modern infrastructure, internet, and AI algorithms have significantly augmented societal access to information, effectively raising the baseline IQ.
    - However, because AI can automate most cognitive tasks, traditional metrics for judging human capability are becoming obsolete.
- **The Advent of "Emotional Recession":** Driven by materialism, fierce capitalist competition, and hyper-individualism, society is facing a severe decline in collective empathy.
    - This deficit manifests as rising burnout, loneliness, and apathy, such as bystanders ignoring road accidents.



Features of Emotional Intelligence (Daniel Goleman's Model)

	Recognition	Regulation
Personal Competence	**Self-Awareness** • **Self-confidence** • **Understanding own strengths** and **weaknesses** • Understanding **impact of your behaviour on others** • Understanding **impact of other's behaviour on your emotional** state	**Self-Management** • **Emotional regulation:** keep a check on disruptive emotions • Acting in **congruence** of your values. • **Open to change:** adaptability • **Goal-orientation** irrespective of hurdles.
Social Competence	**Social Awareness** • Understanding **social situations.** • **Empathetic orientation** • **Active listening**	**Social Management** • **Team management** • **Conflict resolution** • **Sensitive and empathetic** interpersonal relations and communication.

Significance of EI in the Present Context

- **In Public Administration**
    - **Citizen-Centric Governance:** Empathizing with citizens builds trust and overcomes red tape (e.g., IAS Armstrong Pame's crowdfunded **People's Road**).
    - **Probity:** Ensures that a civil servant's discretion is guided by integrity rather than vested interests (e.g., E. Sreedharan's ethical leadership of the Delhi Metro).
    - **Crisis Management:** Empowers administrators to handle grievances and maintain service delivery under extreme pressure (e.g., District Magistrates organizing relief for migrants during COVID-19).
- **In the Workplace**
    - **Leadership**: Enables ethical decision-making and builds motivated teams (e.g., Ratan Tata's empathetic crisis outreach).
    - **Employees**: Fosters emotional resilience, empathy, and collaboration (e.g., TCS pandemic mental health support).
    - **Organizations:** Drives productivity and deep organizational commitment (e.g., Taj staff prioritizing guest safety during 26/11).
- **In Social Relations**
    - **Restoring Human Bonds:** Empathy and social awareness counter modern materialism and tech-induced isolation (e.g., citizen rescue efforts during Kerala floods; countering Japan's **hikikomori** crisis).

> When dealing with people, remember you are not dealing with creatures of logic, but with creatures of emotion.
>
> **-Dale Carnegie**

-
    - **Conflict Resolution:** Active listening and emotional regulation de-escalate tensions fueled by digital echo chambers (e.g., Nelson Mandela's approach to South Africa's transition).
    - **Navigating Diversity:** Bridges socio-cultural divides through inclusivity and understanding (e.g., Jacinda Ardern's response to the Christchurch shootings).

Conclusion

As AI automates cognitive tasks, cultivating uniquely human skills like empathy makes EQ a strategic priority, necessitating a mutualistic human-AI synergy guided by robust ethical governance.

6.4. KEY WORDS

Key Words			
Cognitive Liberty	Utilitarianism	Privacy	Disinformation
Citizen-Centric Governance	Deontology	Surveillance	Consequentialism

6.5. PRACTICE QUESTION

Answer Canvas		
As Artificial Intelligence and neurotechnology increasingly intersect with public administration, they raise profound ethical concerns regarding cognitive liberty, surveillance, and human rights. In this context, discuss the ethical dilemmas involved and explain how Emotional Intelligence can aid public administrators in ensuring the responsible integration of these technologies.		
Introduction: Define the profound ethical complexities of AI and neurotechnology, highlighting threats to privacy, cognitive liberty, and democratic fairness. Briefly state why these disruptive technologies necessitate robust human governance frameworks immediately.	**Body:** Detail ethical dilemmas like mass surveillance, embedded bias, and data monopolies. Next, explain how emotional intelligence empowers public administrators to prioritize empathy, fundamental rights, and fairness over mere algorithmic efficiency.	**Conclusion:** Conclude by emphasizing that while AI and neurotechnology drive progress, their true societal value depends on integrating strong regulatory guardrails with enduring human virtues of empathy, accountability, and emotional resilience.

VISIONIAS INSPIRING INNOVATION
DAKSHA MAINS MENTORING PROGRAM 2026

DAKSHA MAINS MENTORING PROGRAM 2026

(A Strategic Revision, Practice, and Enrichment Mentoring Program for Mains Examination 2026)

DATE 6 July
DURATION 5 Months

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE PROGRAMME

- Highly experienced and qualified team of mentors
- Scheduled group sessions for strategy discussions, live practice, and peer interaction
- Well-structured revision and practice plan for GS Mains, Essay & Ethics
- Access toDaksha Mains Practice Tests
- Emphasis on score maximization and performance improvement
- Personalized one-to-one sessions with mentors
- Subject-wise strategy documents based on thorough research
- Continuous performance assessment, monitoring and smart interventions

For any assistance call us at:
+91 8468022022, +91 9019066066
enquiry@visionias.in

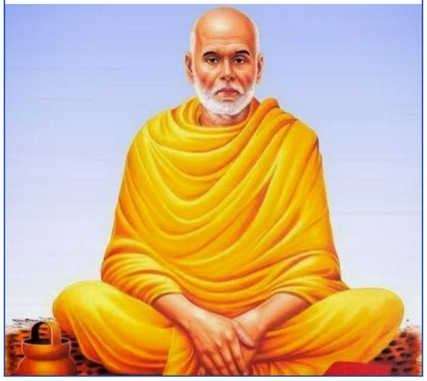
7. MISCELLANEOUS

7.1. VALUES OF MAHATMA GANDHI AND SREE NARAYAN GURU

Introduction

India commemorated the centenary of the historic 1925 meeting between **Sree Narayana Guru** and **Mahatma Gandhi** at Sivagiri Mutt, Kerala. Their conversation centered on the Vaikom Satyagraha, eradicating untouchability, non-violence, and uplifting the marginalized.

Sree Narayana Guru



About Sree Narayana Guru (1856–1928)

- **Background:** Born in Chembazhanthi, Kerala
- **Social Reform:** Founded the Shree Narayana Dharma Paripalana Yogam **(SNDP) in 1903** to uplift Ezhavas and other marginalized communities through social and educational reform.
- **Key Contributions:** Consecrated a Shiva Linga at Aruvippuram (1888) and authored prominent Advaita Vedanta texts, including **Nivritti Panchakam** and **Atmopadesa Satakam.**

Views of Sree Narayana Guru and Mahatma Gandhi on Various Aspects

Aspect	Sree Narayana Guru	Mahatma Gandhi
Social Reform	Rejected caste entirely (**One Caste, One Religion, One God**); advocated erasing caste from official records.	Opposed untouchability but supported the **Varnashrama** system.
Religious Views	Believed Hinduism was sufficient, but accepted that other religions could also lead to liberation.	Viewed all religions as equal paths to truth; believed politics must be rooted in religion and morality.
Temple Entry	Actively opened and consecrated temples for all castes (e.g., **Aruvippuram** Movement).	Strongly supported temple entry movements for Dalits (e.g., **Vaikom** Satyagraha).
Education	Saw **education** as the ultimate cure for social evils; championed equal educational opportunities for women.	Promoted **Nai Talim** (basic education), blending manual labor and crafts with academics in the mother tongue.

Conclusion

Sree Narayana Guru's vision of social equality and spiritual humanism remains highly relevant, inspiring contemporary efforts toward gender empowerment, caste inclusion, and environmental stewardship to build a just and harmonious India.

7.2. CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE OF BHAGAVAD GITA

Introduction

The Vice-President of India called the **Bhagavad Gita a universal guide** offering moral clarity in times of rapid change. He said the teachings of the Gita emphasize righteous conduct, purposeful action, and strong character.

> When disappointment stares me in the face and all alone, I see not one ray of light, I go back to the Bhagavad Gita.
>
> **-Mahatma Gandhi**

Key Principles & Contemporary Relevance

- **For Individuals:**
    - **Stress Management: Sthitaprajna** (steady wisdom) and **Samatva** (evenness of mind) promote emotional stability amidst life's dualities.
    - **Work & Motivation: Nishkama Karma** (selfless action) focuses on effort over results, reducing anxiety and fostering intrinsic motivation.
- **For Administrators & Civil Servants:**
    - **Competency Frameworks:** Karmayogi Competency Framework emphasizes **Swadhyay** (self-awareness), **Sahakarayata** (collaboration), **Rajya Karma** (efficient delivery), **Svadharma** (serving citizens).
    - **Public Service Ethics: Karma Phala Tyaga** encourages duty without selfish rewards (Karma Yoga).
    - **Empathy & Soft Skills: Sheelam Param Bhushnam** promotes character, empathy, and active listening.
- **For Business Leaders:**
    - **Decision-Making:** Rise above success/failure binary to make rational choices.
    - **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR): Lokasamgraha** aligns with societal welfare and stakeholder well-being.
    - **Leadership: Inside-out approach** advocates that self-mastery and ego control precede effectively managing external challenges.
- **For Society & World:**
    - **Just War & Justice:** Peace is ideal, but moral action may require confronting injustice.
    - **Social Harmony:** Promotes tolerance, universal interconnectedness, and global unity.
    - **Sustainable Living:** Control of greed and desires (**Kama**) underpins ethical, sustainable behavior.

Conclusion

The Bhagavad Gita serves as a **comprehensive manual for life and management**. Its transition from **teleological ethics to procedural ethics** provides a robust framework for navigating modern complexities.

7.3. ETHICS AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Introduction

Climate change is the defining moral imperative of our era, exposing a **central injustice: its heaviest burdens fall on those least responsible.** Recent summits like COP30 in Belém and the Santa Marta Conference reflect this vital shift, reframing climate action from environmental pledges to legal and ethical obligations rooted in human rights.

Key Stakeholders and their Interests

Stakeholder	**Interests**
Governments	• Protect citizens and the environment, ensure economic stability, and fulfill international commitments.
Intergovernmental Organizations	• Promote global cooperation, facilitate climate negotiations, and set international targets.
Businesses	• Manage climate risks, adopt sustainable practices, and invest in clean tech.
Local Communities	• Protect livelihoods, ensure clean resources, adapt to changes, and shape local decisions.
Indigenous Peoples	• Defend rights, preserve traditional knowledge, and ensure representation in climate policies.
Scientific Community	• Conduct research, improve climate models, and advocate for evidence-based policies.

Ethical Issues with Regard to Climate Change

- **Historical Injustice:** Industrialized nations (e.g., US) exhausted the carbon budget, leaving the Global South to suffer. **Ethical equity** (Common but differentiated responsibilities) demands the North lead mitigation and fund the Loss & Damage Fund via grants.

- **Disproportionate Regional Impact:** Developing nations face **asymmetrical burdens**. E.g., South Asian and African countries
- **Indigenous Climate Justice:** Extreme weather and green-tech mineral extraction exploit native lands. Justice requires Free, Prior, and Informed Consent **(FPIC)**; prioritizing native heritage over aggressive global mitigation.
- **Technological Inequity:** Global North **IP regimes** restrict clean energy access. Prioritizing corporate profits over planetary survival creates a severe moral crisis**.**
- **Intergenerational Equity & Integrity:** Resource overconsumption violates future generations' rights; **a moral duty** enforced by the 2025 ICJ Advisory Opinion.
- **Corporate Responsibility and Greenwashing**: Some corporations contribute heavily to emissions while portraying themselves as environmentally friendly.

> **Ethics and Equity** are at the core of debate of climate change. Debate has to move from **Climate Change** to **Climate Justice.**
>
> — Narendra Modi

Way Forward: UNESCO's Declaration of Ethical Principles in relation to Climate Change

- **Prevention of Harm**: To better anticipate the consequences of climate change and implement responsible and effective policies to mitigate and adapt to climate change.
- **Precautionary Approach**: To not postpone the adoption of measures to prevent or mitigate the adverse effects of climate change.
- **Equity and Justice**: Respond to climate change in a way that benefits all, in the spirit of justice and equity.
- **Solidarity**: Support the people and groups most vulnerable to climate change and natural disasters, particularly in the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS).
- **Scientific Knowledge and Integrity in Decision-Making**: Strengthen the interface between science and policy to optimally aid decision-making and the implementation of relevant long-term strategies, including risk prediction.

Conclusion

Climate change is not just a scientific issue but an ethical one, demanding fairness, responsibility, and inclusion. True progress requires global cooperation rooted in equity and justice, ensuring a sustainable and resilient future for all; especially the most vulnerable.

7.4. ETHICS OF GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

Introduction

Global governance functions in a highly interconnected world where issues like conflict, climate change, and technological disruption require collective action. However, its effectiveness is increasingly undermined by the dominance of power politics over ethical cooperation. As the UN marks 80 years, rising geopolitical rivalries, institutional paralysis, and systemic inequalities highlight a deep ethical deficit in global decision-making.

Key Stakeholders and Their Interests	
Stakeholder	**Interests**
Sovereign states	• **Recognition from other States** as a legitimate participant in Global Governance. E.g., Palestine is not recognized as a State by some global bodies. • **States want to ensure their sovereign autonomy** and may prioritize issues such as **national security and economic growth** over international considerations.
Civil Society	• They expect the **fulfillment of certain obligations** in lieu of the rights and benefits that they provide. • These have a **responsibility to promote international cooperation and advance global public goods** such as human rights, peace and environmental stability.
Global Institutions	• To **hold governments and international organizations accountable** to their ethical obligations.

Private sector	• **Responsibility to promote shareholder value,** alongside the duty to respect human rights, protect the environment, and **contribute to the broader socio-economic development of society.**
Individuals	• They have the responsibility to be **informed and engaged citizens**, and to act in ways that promotes the greater good of society.

Ethical Issues in Global Governance

- **Institutional Paralysis & Structural Inequity:** Powerful nations dominate the WTO and UNSC, sidelining the Global South. Veto-driven deadlocks over conflicts (Gaza, Ukraine, Sudan) highlight the urgent need for equitable representation and distributive justice.
- **The Accountability Void & Ad-Hoc Governance:** Without universal enforcement, international laws lack binding power. This enables ad-hoc, leader-centric institutions (e.g., Board of Peace) to wield global authority without democratic accountability.
- **Selective Humanitarianism & Discriminatory Norms:** "Responsibility to Protect" doctrines are frequently weaponized, while broad economic sanctions inflict collective punishment on civilians rather than delivering justice.
- **Algorithmic Colonialism & Automated Warfare:** Tech monopolies threaten data sovereignty, while Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS) delegate life-or-death decisions to algorithms, stripping human empathy and moral agency from the battlefield.
- **Economic Coercion & Displacement Apathy:** Debt-trap diplomacy, corporate evasion, and militarized borders violate the universal duty of care, systematically abandoning marginalized populations and unrecognized climate refugees.

Moving Beyond Power Dynamics: The Way Forward

- **Institutionalizing Robust Accountability/Reforms:** Global governance must transition towards enforceable mandates. Empowering neutral bodies and establishing measurable compliance targets.
- **Upholding the International Rule of Law:** Policymaking must be anchored in **procedural fairness and consensus, not** the realpolitik of veto-wielding states.
- **Fostering Restorative Diplomacy:** Global governance should pivot from coercive diplomacy, like blanket economic sanctions that harm civilians, toward a dialogue-driven approach.
- **Democratizing Representation:** Ethical governance requires dismantling plutocratic structures where influence is tied to funding.

> **Effective global governance** is not a luxury but a **necessity** in today's **interconnected world**, where the actions of one nation can have **far-reaching impacts** on others.
>
> **- Kofi Annan**

Conclusion

True global governance demands prioritizing ethics over raw power. Embracing ethical consensus and the rule of law ensures institutions serve all stakeholders. By enforcing strict accountability, ensuring universal human rights, and fostering genuine inclusivity, the international community can dismantle systemic discrimination and build a fair system that serves all equitably and sustainably.

7.5. ETHICS OF WAR

Introduction

Rising global conflicts (Russia-Ukraine, US-Iran war, etc.) are prolonged and destructive, with civilians worst affected. Against this backdrop, understanding ethical implications of war is essential for finding pathways toward ending conflicts and building a sustainable peace.

Key Stakeholders and Their Interests	
Stakeholder	**Interests**
Nation States	• Territorial sovereignty, political control, national security, and regime legitimacy.
Great Powers	• Geopolitical influence, balance of power, and prevent rivals from gaining dominance.
Regional Powers	• Stability, regional balance, and economic or strategic interests.
International Organisations	• Maintain international peace and security, and coordinate humanitarian responses.
Non-State Groups	• Autonomy, ideology, territorial control and resources.
Economic Actors	• Investments, profits, and maintain supply chains.
Local Populations and Civil Society	• Safety, economic stability, human rights, and access to essential services.

Factors behind the Resurgence of Wars: An Ethical Lens

- **Weak Enforcement of International Law**: UNSC's decision-making often ends up in stalemate due to the veto power of the five permanent members.
- **Territorial and Border Disputes**: Borders drawn during colonial periods or after major wars often remain contested. E.g., Durand Line issue (Afghanistan & Pakistan).
- **Changing World Order and shifting Balance of Power: Thucydides trap** (rising power (China) threatens to displace a ruling power (USA).
- **Ethnic and Religious Fragmentation:** The unaddressed societal divisions and animosities can fuel conflict (e.g., Rwandan genocide, Myanmar civil war etc.).
- **Competition over Natural Resources:** Resource dynamics can both trigger and intensify conflicts. **E.g.,** oil, land, water, critical minerals, etc.

Just War Theory

- It provides the **basis** for '**ethical restraint**' in war.
- It is divided into **three categories**:
  - **jus ad bellum** (justice towards war): C**onditions under which it is morally justified for a state to initiate war**. **E.g.,** self-defence, last resort, etc.
  - **jus in bello** (justice in war): Ethical and legal rules governing how war should be fought. **For e.g.,** principles such as **discrimination** (between combatants and civilians) and **proportionality** (avoiding excessive force).
  - **jus post bellum** (justice after war): Concerns the **moral responsibilities after a war ends**. **For e.g.,** fair peace settlements, reconstruction, accountability for war crimes, etc.

Impact of War

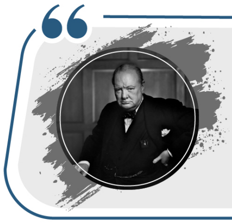
- **Humanitarian Crisis:** Reshape demographics and place immense pressure on economic and ecological resources.
- **Economic Impacts: Disrupted supply chains** (e.g., Strait of Hormuz in US-Iran War) and **impact on National economies** (e.g., according to the World Bank estimates, the total cost of reconstruction and recovery in Ukraine is $524 billion).
- **Cultural Erosion:** Loss of heritage sites (E.g., Kyiv Pechersk Lavra monastery complex) and artifacts, manipulation of cultural narratives, and weakening of social ties.
- **Political Shifts:** Rise of authoritarianism; **peacefulness has deteriorated every year since 2014** (Global Peace Index 2025).
- **Environmental Degradation:** Wars and military operations cause widespread contamination and pollution of land, water, and air. (e.g., Agent Orange during Vietnam War).

Global Efforts to Stop Wars/Conflicts

- **UN Institutions: UNSC** (e.g., Peace resolutions, impose sanctions), **UN Peacekeeping** (conflict prevention, peace enforcement).
- **International Criminal Court** (by Rome Statute, 1998): prosecutes individuals for crimes of international concern.
- **Multilateral coordination**: Non-Alignment Movement, NATO, Warsaw Pact, NAM etc.
- **Regional organizations:** E.g., ASEAN, African Union, SAARC, to address local security challenges.
- **Laws and Convention**: Genocide Convention (1948), Geneva Convention (1949), Hague Convention (1899 & 1907), etc.
- **Multilateral treaties to regulate weapons**:
    - **For Nuclear**: Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), etc.
    - **Missiles and related technologies**: Hague Code of Conduct; Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) etc.
    - **Others**: The Biological Weapons Convention (BWC); The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC); etc.

Way Forward Towards Sustainable Peace and Security

- **Reforms in United Nations:** Expanding **membership** of the **Security Council**, addressing the misuse of **veto** powers, and ensuring **transparency** in UN's operations.
- **Protection of Human Rights and Rule of Law:** Ensuring **accountability** for war crimes and protecting fundamental rights through mechanisms such as the **International Criminal Court**.
- **Inclusive and Just Development:** Addressing structural causes of conflict such as **poverty, inequality, unemployment, and political exclusion** is crucial.
- **Role of Governments:** Proactively **develop and enforce national policies** to govern the use of emerging technologies like Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS), ensuring **human oversight and accountability**.
- **Promoting Dialogue and Diplomacy: Track-II diplomacy, regional forums, and confidence-building measures** can reduce mistrust between conflicting parties.



> The price of greatness is responsibility.
>
> **- Winston Churchill**

Conclusion

War represents not just a failure of diplomacy, but a failure of ethics. Sustainable peace requires moving beyond power politics toward a morally grounded international order that prioritizes human dignity over strategic dominance.

7.6. ETHICS OF CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

Introduction

Historically, all societies have used the death penalty/capital punishment to deter heinous crimes. Since the mid-20th century, human rights campaigns have led to its abolition or moratorium in about 170 countries. Yet, **Amnesty International's 2025 report** notes a 78% global surge in executions from countries like China, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, etc., making capital punishment a highly contentious issue in modern criminal justice and ethics. It is based on the **principle of retributive justice.**

Key Stakeholders and Their Interests	
Stakeholders	**Interests**
Condemned Individuals	• Right to Life, Fair Trial and Due Process, Discrimination, **Irreversible punishment**, psychological toll etc.

Victims' Families	• **Justice and Closure, Retribution** (Punishment) and **Restorative** (Reconciliation) justice, etc.
Society at Large	• Public safety, Justice, Collective conscience and Moral standards
Legal and Judicial Systems	• Ensuring **fair trials**, Upholding constitutional values, Balancing deterrence with human rights, Irreversibility of Error
Human Rights Organizations	• Reform over Retribution, Human Dignity, **right to life** and the potential for judicial errors.
Governments and Policymakers	• Navigating **public opinion, International obligations, Effectiveness** of capital punishment as a deterrent.

Arguments for the Death Penalty

- **Deterrence: Based on the principle of utilitarianism (Consequentialist Ethics),** some argue that death penalty **deters serious crimes.**
- **Retributive Justice:** Justice requires that wrongdoers receive punishment proportionate to their crimes. The **principle of "an eye for an eye"** is often invoked.
- **Closure and vindication:** It is often argued that the death penalty brings a sense of finality, allowing victims' families to find peace and move forward knowing the perpetrator has received the maximum penalty.
- **Drain on public finances**: Maintaining a secure prison system for high-risk, violent offenders act as a drain on government resources.
- **Other:** Prevention of re-offending, etc.

> "If he has committed a murder, he must die."
>
> — Immanuel Kant

Arguments against the Death Penalty

- **Violates the Right to Life and Human Dignity**: It is viewed as incompatible with the inherent dignity of every individual and the fundamental right to life.
- **Risk of Irreversible Error and Discrimination:** There is always a possibility of errors leading to wrongful convictions. Once a person is executed, the error cannot be reversed, making it a final and irreversible punishment.
- **Lack of Deterrence and Alternatives:** There is little evidence that the death penalty is more effective than life imprisonment in deterring crime.

Death Penalty in India

- **Legal Framework:** In the **Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS),** it is primarily outlined in **sections 103** and **104 for terrorism, murder of public officials, certain cases of rape,** etc. offenses.
- **Judicial Doctrine:** The Supreme Court, in in Bachan Singh V. State of Punjab **(1980)** gave **"rarest of rare" doctrine**.
    - In **Machhi Singh vs State of Punjab Case,** certain criteria were laid down by the court to assess what could actually fall under the rarest of rare doctrine.
- **Pardoning Power of President and Governor:** Once the appeal process has been exhausted and the higher courts have confirmed the defendant's death sentence, the defendant can submit petitions for mercy to the state or national executive.
- **Recent Trends:** Despite more than 500 people being on death row, e**xecutions have become rare** with courts increasingly commuting death sentences to life imprisonment, reflecting a cautious approach.

Way Forward

- **Need for Balance**: Death penalty debate must balance the **accused's rights, victims' interests, and society's need for justice and deterrence**.

- **Law Commission Recommendation: Abolishing the death penalty** for all crimes **except terrorism and related offences,** citing its limited deterrent effect and the risk of judicial error. (**262nd Law Commission Report (2015)**)
- **International Perspective:** Article 6 of the **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)** permits the death penalty **only for the "most serious crimes"** and encourages its abolition.
- **Human Rights Organizations:** They recommend a shift toward **victim-centric justice and restorative practices** over retributive punishment.

> "In any case, **frequent punishments** are a sign of **weakness** or **slackness** in the **government**. There is no man so bad that he cannot be made good for something. **No man should be put to death, even as an example**, if he can be left to **live without danger to society**."
>
> — **Jean-Jacques Rousseau**

Conclusion

Since the adoption of the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UNDHR) in 1948**, there has been a marked global shift towards abolition. Despite this progress, the death penalty persists in several countries, often amid allegations of unfair trials, political repression, or use for non-violent offenses. Thus**, humane and evidence-based alternatives** are needed to ensure justice and respect for life.

7.7. ETHICS OF MIGRATION

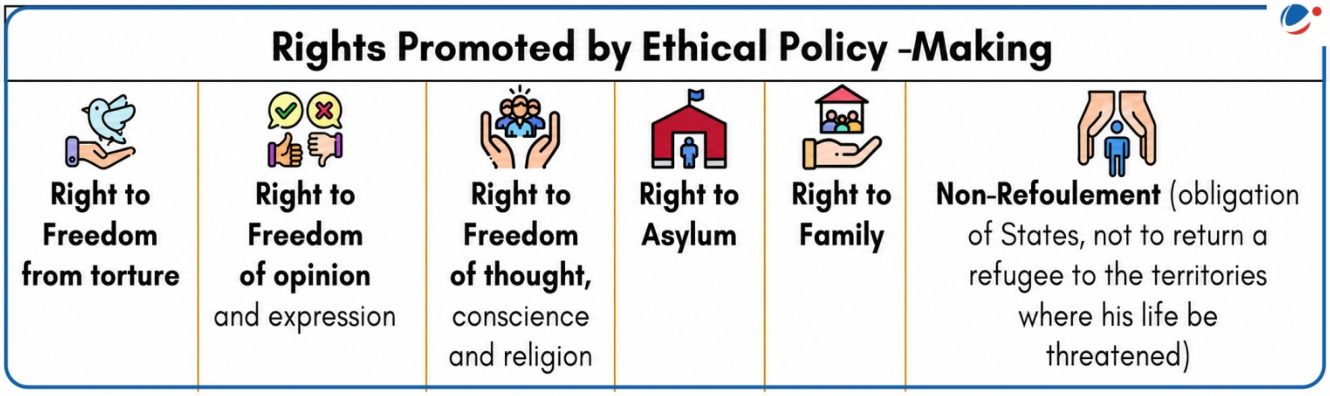
Introduction

Recent policies, such as the EU's June 2026 Pact on Migration and Asylum, underscore a trend: the global approach to cross-border movement is increasingly transactional. To maximize utility, countries are devising stringent frameworks that prioritize productive labor while aggressively deterring distress migration. Consequently, these self-serving policies often compromise core ethical principles and human dignity.

Key Stakeholders and Their Interests	
Stakeholders	**Interests**
Origin Country	• It brings **remittances** and on the other hand, it causes **brain drain** (migration of talented people).
Destination Country	• It wants to receive **only productive** migrants and refugees. Also, they are not open to migration above a **certain limit** as it may impact **demographic change** and **resource utilization** patterns.
International Organization	• Organizations such as **International Organization for Migration (IOM)** oversee that **migrants' rights** are well protected wherever they live.

Ethical Issues Associated with Cross Border Migration

- **Violates Human Rights and Dignity:** Migrants often face violations of their human rights, including exploitation, abuse, and discrimination.
- **Lack of Fairness and Equal Treatment:** Refugee policies of countries with their utilitarian approach give priority to the migration of skilled workforce and discourage distress migration and refugees.
- **Social Discrimination:** Migrants often face marginalization, unequal access to resources, and limited opportunities.
- **No Recognition of Climate Refugees:** Climate refugees often face challenges in obtaining legal recognition as refugees.
- **Temporary Labour Migration Programs (TLMP) of High-Income Countries:** Such migrant workers often have more restricted rights. This can perpetuate inequalities and discrimination based on nationality or immigration status.


Rights Promoted by Ethical Policy -Making

Right to Freedom from torture

Right to Freedom of opinion and expression

Right to Freedom of thought, conscience and religion

Right to Asylum

Right to Family

Non-Refoulement (obligation of States, not to return a refugee to the territories where his life be threatened)

Potential Solutions: A Way Forward

- **Equality and Non-discrimination**: States should address direct and indirect discrimination against and unequal treatment of people in **laws**, **policies,** and **practices**, etc.
- **Respecting Human Rights**: Nations should **refrain** from **arbitrary detention**, **torture**, or **collective expulsion of migrants**.
- **Participation and Inclusion**: **Migrants** should be **consulted** and **included** in the development of **relevant public policy**.
- **People-centric Approach**: It recognizes that **migrants** and refugees are **men** and **women** who **often make difficult choices** and deserve fair and **decent treatment**.
- **Accountability and Rule of Law**: The system **governing migration** should allow **migrants** full access to **justice**, including redress and remedies if they experience human rights violations.
- **Acknowledging and Providing Protection:** To individuals displaced due to climate change.

Conclusion

Ultimately, global migration must shift from transactional policies to a framework rooted in empathy and human dignity. By **balancing national interests with ethical imperatives**, nations can dismantle discriminatory practices. Protecting vulnerable populations, including climate refugees, and prioritizing human rights will transform global border movement into a just, **inclusive system** that genuinely respects the rights of all individuals seeking refuge.

> **Migration** is not a threat but an **opportunity** for both the migrants and the societies they join.
> It is a chance to **build bridges**, **create understanding**, and **promote mutual respect.**
>
> — Angela Merkel

7.8. ETHICS OF DOPING IN SPORTS

Introduction

Doping in sports represents a profound crisis of integrity, violating the fundamental **Spirit of Sport.** As India targets the 2036 Olympics, upholding clean sports is a critical ethical and national imperative. This was underscored by the proposed amendments to the **National Anti-Doping Act (NADA) 2022** to address the growing trafficking and distribution of prohibited performance-enhancing substances and methods.

Key Stakeholders and their Interests	
Stakeholders	**Interests**
Athletes	• Pursuing excellence, career longevity, and rewards while facing a **crisis of conscience** against the systemic pressure to use PEDs (Performance-Enhancing Drug).
Coaches & Support Staff	• Maximizing athletes' competitive success, securing professional reputation, and upholding the **fiduciary duty** to protect athletes' well-being.

NADA & Law Enforcement	• Ensuring a level playing field, enforcing compliance, and disrupting illegal drug supply chains via intelligence operations (e.g., Operation Upstream).
State & Sports Federations	• Projecting national prestige globally, ensuring statutory compliance with law, and fostering sports ethics.
Suppliers & Cartels	• Maximizing illicit profits by exploiting regulatory loopholes to distribute prohibited substances.
Public & Spectators	• Witnessing authentic human virtue and maintaining trust in the institutional fairness of competitive sports.

Ethical Issues of Doping in Sports

- **Erosion of Fair Play and Justice:** Doping corrupts **the Rawlsian concept of fairness**. Clean athletes are robbed of rightful victories by competitors using illicit substances like stanozolol.
- **Medal-at-all-Costs Mentality**: Doping undermines the spirit of fairness, integrity, and the "level playing field" that sport is supposed to represent.
- **Inequality and Access:** Doping may widen inequalities as access to sophisticated drugs and masking techniques is uneven.
- **Breach of Fiduciary Duty:** The recent suspension of India junior national coach illustrates the betrayal of a mentor's inherent duty to protect and guide young athletes.
- **Commodification of the Human Body:** Administering dangerous metabolic modulators, such as Adenosine Monophosphate, prioritizes immediate athletic output over long-term health, reducing the athlete to a mere instrument of performance rather than an **end in themselves.**
- **Corporate Complicity and Exploitation:** The clandestine trafficking of PEDs masquerading as legitimate sports supplements exploits regulatory gaps (e.g., Selective Androgen Receptor Modulators).

Measures required to curb Doping

- **Intelligence-Led Enforcement:** Collaborative operations between NADA, CBI, and FSSAI (e.g., Operation Upstream) are vital to dismantling illegal PED cartels and targeting distributors.
- **Strengthening Fiduciary Accountability:** Implementing stringent professional and legal **sanctions** against complicit coaches, support staff, and medical personnel to reinforce the **ethical responsibility**.
- **Statutory Alignment and Transparency:** Utilizing the mandate of the National Sports Governance Act 2025 to **align** national anti-doping rules with the WADA Code.
- **Enhancing Scientific Capacity:** Developing advanced, indigenous forensic infrastructure, such as the proposed WADA-accredited laboratory at Rashtriya Raksha University, to ensure unassailable detection methodologies and uphold **procedural justice** in enforcement.
- **Value based Education**: Training athletes on sporting ethics (fairness, integrity, and respect) from a young age to instill a moral rejection of doping as a shortcut to success.

Conclusion

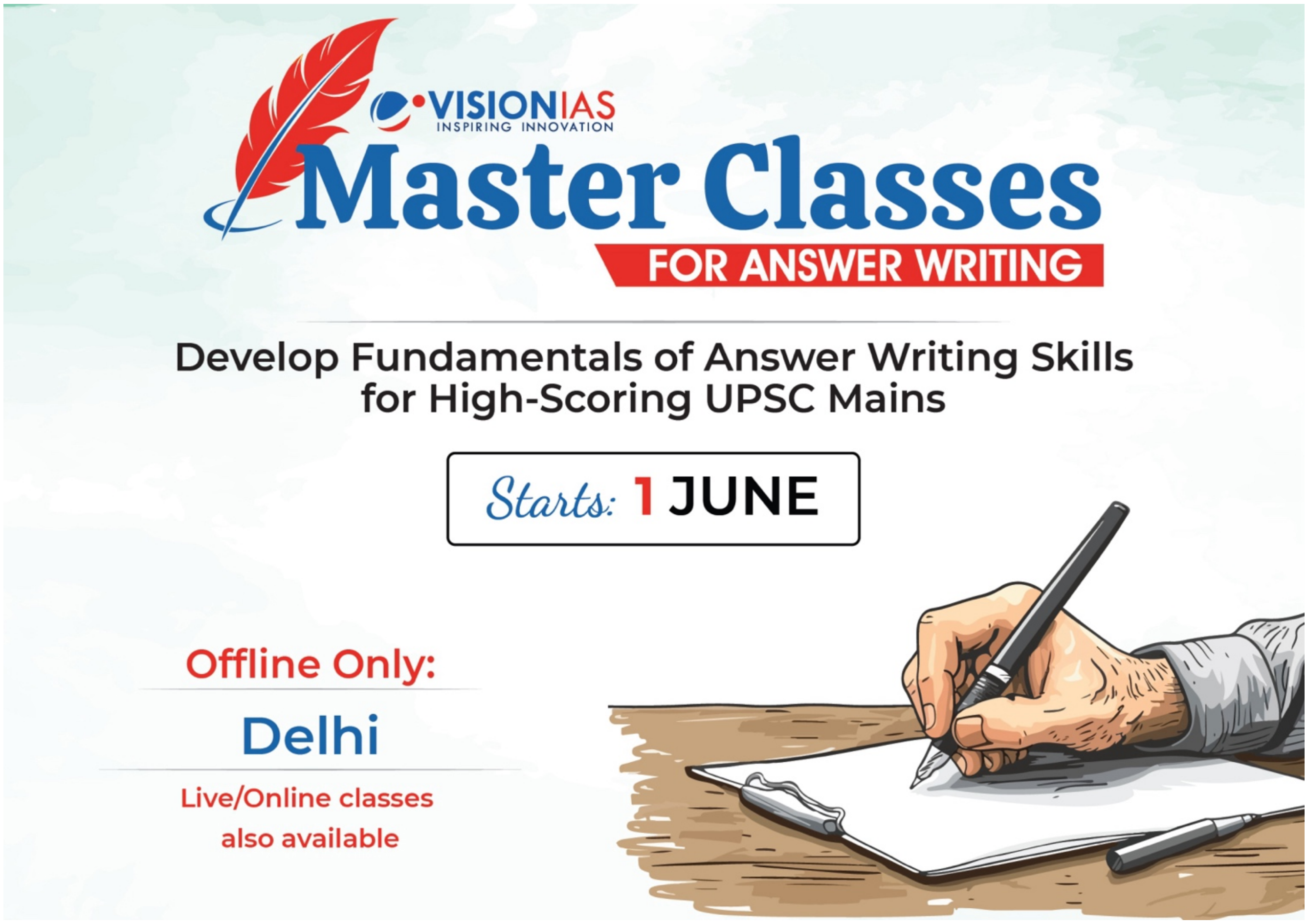
Doping subverts the ethical foundation of sports, replacing human virtue with artificial enhancement. By pivoting toward intelligence-driven enforcement, rigorous legislative frameworks, and value-based education, India can effectively dismantle illicit supply chains. Upholding probity in sports remains an indispensable moral duty to ensure genuine excellence, fairness, and safeguard national honor on the global stage.

7.9. KEY WORDS

Key Words			
Commodification	Utilitarianism	Intergenerational Equity	Restorative Justice
Digital Colonialism	Nishkama Karma	Climate Justice	Automated Warfare

7.10. PRACTICE QUESTION

Answer Canvas		
Global governance and international conflict resolution increasingly suffer from an ethical deficit, prioritizing geopolitical realism over humanitarian morality. Evaluate this statement. How can the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita provide a robust ethical framework for modern global leadership?		
Introduction: Begin by briefly defining the ethical crisis in global governance, highlighting how unchecked geopolitical power and systemic discrimination overshadow humanitarian morality, leading to paralyzed institutions and prolonged global conflicts today.	**Body:** Discuss selective humanitarianism, algorithmic colonialism, and institutional paralysis. Apply the Bhagavad Gita's selfless action to propose equitable, accountable, democratized, and ethical global governance frameworks.	**Conclusion:** Conclude that progress demands prioritizing ethical consensus over raw power. Embracing sustainable justice, inclusive diplomacy, and universal human dignity ensures a highly resilient international order serving all vulnerable global populations.


VISIONIAS
INSPIRING INNOVATION
Master Classes
FOR ANSWER WRITING
Develop Fundamentals of Answer Writing Skills for High-Scoring UPSC Mains
Starts: 1 JUNE
Offline Only:
Delhi
Live/Online classes also available

8. TEST YOUR LEARNING

1. You are a District Magistrate of a district where the government has recently implemented an AI-powered citizen grievance redressal system under Smart Cities Mission. The system processes complaints automatically, reducing response time from weeks to hours with 80% automation.

However, six months after implementation, several concerning incidents have emerged. A widow seeking pension benefits was repeatedly asked by the AI Chatbot to provide documents she had already submitted multiple times. This led to her being forced to visit the office. There were also other technical issues reported with respect to the AI Chatbot, inconveniencing the citizens in effective grievance redressal.

The State Government demands 90% AI automation. While urban citizens appreciate the speed, rural and marginalized communities feel alienated. Citizen satisfaction surveys show declining trust despite improved processing times.

Your team is divided - younger officers embrace AI efficiency while experienced staff worries about losing human connection in governance.

Based on the scenario above, answer the following questions:

a) Identify the key ethical issues in this case.
b) Design a strategy to develop officers' emotional intelligence while working with AI systems.
c) Suggest a framework integrating AI efficiency with human empathy in governance. What safeguards would prevent service dehumanization?

For Reference- Emotional Intelligence in the Age of AI

2. With the rise of digital platforms, celebrities promoting illegal or harmful products have attracted increasing scrutiny. While Indian laws such as the Consumer Protection Act, 2019, ASCI guidelines, and recent directives from the Department of Consumer Affairs aim to regulate these endorsements, challenges remain due to gaps in transparency and ethical responsibility.

Based on the scenario above, answer the following questions:

a) Analyze the role of various stakeholders in promoting ethical advertising and endorsements. What are the challenges faced in enforcement?
b) Discuss the significance of collective moral responsibility and ethics education in improving the conduct of public figures in the digital era.
c) Propose a robust strategy involving legal reforms, accountability mechanisms, and awareness campaigns to curb unethical celebrity endorsements, especially for online betting and similar harmful products.

For Reference- Celebrities and Endorsement of Products

3. You are an honest IAS officer, recently appointed as the Municipal Commissioner of a rapidly urbanizing city struggling with inequality and weak infrastructure. Public trust in the municipal body is already low, as your predecessor was removed on corruption charges.

Within days of your posting, a newly built flyover collapses during heavy rains in a low-income area, causing deaths, injuries, and destruction of homes and shops. The tragedy fuels deep public anger and distrust in institutions. The crisis is worsened by spread of misinformation on social media. Honest staff feel demoralized and unfairly blamed, slowing relief work. Meanwhile, social media narratives amplify the credibility crisis of the municipal administration.

The State Chief Secretary directs you to act sensitively but firmly, ensuring both relief and restoration of public confidence.

Based on the scenario above, answer the following questions:

a) Identify ethical issues and dilemmas arise in this case, especially regarding institutional trust,
b) What immediate and long-term steps would you take to manage the crisis and rebuild institutional credibility?
c) Social media is being misused to spread disinformation. How would you leverage the same platform to engage positively with citizens and restore trust in the administration?

For Reference- Trust in Public Institutions

4. You are the Municipal Commissioner of a large Indian city that has recently reported a steep rise in dog bite cases and suspected rabies deaths. Animal welfare organizations are protesting against any form of relocation or culling of stray dogs. Meanwhile, residents are demanding immediate action to protect public safety. Media reports have intensified public fear, and there is pressure on you to act quickly.

Based on the scenario above, answer the following questions:

a) What are the key ethical issues in this case?
b) How would you balance public safety with animal rights?
c) Suggest a humane and practical course of action that upholds constitutional and legal provisions.

For Reference- Ethics of Stray Dog Management

5. Vijay, an IAS officer, is posted as the District Collector in a region suffering from severe water scarcity. A private multinational company proposes a large-scale groundwater extraction project, promising significant funding for local infrastructure development, including schools, hospitals, and roads. While the project could provide immediate relief and stimulate the local economy, it risks depleting water sources vital for agriculture and rural livelihoods.

Farmers and community leaders oppose the project, fearing loss of irrigation and long-term environmental degradation. At the same time, the state government and political leaders are pressing for approval to attract investment and showcase development. Media outlets and social media campaigns amplify the issue, often framing it in polarized ways. Vijay faces the challenge of balancing development goals, environmental sustainability, public welfare, and political expectations. His decision will have both immediate and long-term consequences for the community, his career, and public trust in governance.

Based on the scenario above, answer the following questions:

a) Identify the ethical dilemmas faced by Vijay in this scenario.
b) What are the options before Vijay? Critically evaluate and examine each of these options.
c) Which of the options, do you think, would be most appropriate for Vijay to adopt and why?

For Reference- Moral Integrity

6. A large global Artificial Intelligence (AI) company has recently been accused of copying books, news articles, and online content without permission to train its large language models. Several authors and small content creators claim that their intellectual property has been used without consent, credit, or compensation. They argue that this practice not only violates copyright but also endangers their livelihoods by creating unfair competition.

The company, however, argues that AI development requires massive datasets, and restricting data would slow innovation. Their models indirectly benefit society by providing free or low-cost AI tools to millions. Strict copyright restrictions could give monopoly power to a few big publishers, stifling knowledge democratization.

You are a policymaker in India tasked with drafting an ethical and regulatory response to this emerging issue.

Based on the scenario above, answer the following questions:

a) Identify the ethical issues involved in this case.
b) As a policymaker, what principles of ethical governance will guide your decision?
c) Suggest a balanced course of action that ensures both innovation and protection of creators' rights.
d) What values should AI companies uphold in their functioning to avoid such ethical dilemmas in the future?

For Reference- Big Tech & Ethics of AI : A Growing Regulatory Challenge

7. You are the District Collector of a semi-urban district where industries and IT parks are coming up rapidly. This is creating new jobs and giving more revenue to the government. But, at the same time, poor and marginalized communities are being displaced, income gaps are increasing, etc.

Some companies are spending money on schools and hospitals under CSR, but the benefits are not reaching everyone equally. People are angry and feel ignored. Civil society groups are blaming the administration for helping corporations more than the people. On the other hand, industrialists are unhappy with rules and delays, which they say slow down development.

The Chief Minister has asked you to make sure that growth in your district is not only fast but also fair and inclusive.

Based on the scenario above, answer the following questions:

a) Identify the major ethical issues and dilemmas in ensuring inclusive growth in this situation.
b) Suggest a set of practical and ethical policy measures you would take in your district to ensure growth is both economically vibrant and socially inclusive.

For Reference- Inclusive Growth

8. A start-up called NeuroLink Solutions has developed a **non-invasive brain–computer interface (BCI)** that can help individuals with paralysis move their limbs using thought patterns. The device has shown remarkable results in clinical trials, enabling users to regain mobility and dramatically improving their quality of life.

The company now plans to **commercially launch the product within six months**, priced at ₹38 lakh per device. It is also finalising agreements with two global tech firms to **access and monetise anonymised neural data** collected from users to "improve AI algorithms." Users will have to agree to data-sharing as part of the product terms.

A senior neurologist, Dr. Meera, a respected figure in the medical community, has joined the start-up as a scientific advisor. She believes that the BCI will be transformative for patients, but she is increasingly uncomfortable that:

- **The pricing will make the device unaffordable for most patients**, especially in low- and middle-income households.
- **Informed consent documents do not clearly explain how neural data will be stored, interpreted, and sold.**
- A representative from a government security agency has approached the company asking for access to neural data for "national security projects," though their request is unofficial and undocumented.

Meanwhile, the parents of a **12-year-old child with paralysis**, desperate for a cure, are pressuring Dr. Meera to approve early access to the device for compassionate use, even though the child cannot meaningfully provide consent.

The CEO insists that commercialization and large-scale data partnerships are essential to "remain competitive and accelerate innovation before rivals catch up."

Based on the scenario above, answer the following questions:

a) Identify the ethical issues involved in this case.
b) From the standpoint of Dr. Meera, analyse the competing values and ethical dilemmas she faces.
c) Suggest a course of action for Dr. Meera that balances scientific progress, patient welfare, and ethical integrity.

For Reference- Ethics of Neuro-Tech Revolution

9. You are the District Magistrate of a tribal and ecologically sensitive district where a large mining project has been approved by the state government. The project promises employment, revenue generation and infrastructure development. However, it will also lead to displacement of local communities, deforestation, and potential long-term environmental damage.

The local population is protesting, alleging that the project violates their right to livelihood and cultural identity. Political leaders are pressurizing you to ensure speedy land acquisition, while civil society groups demand cancellation of the project. Media scrutiny is intense, and your own career prospects may be affected by the way you handle the situation.

You are personally conflicted. On one hand, development and national economic interest are important; on the other, social justice, environmental sustainability and human dignity are at stake.

Based on the scenario above, answer the following questions:

a) Identify the ethical issues involved in the case.
b) What options are available to you as the District Magistrate?
c) How can the principles of the Bhagavad Gita guide your decision-making?
d) What would be your final course of action? Justify ethically.

For Reference- Contemporary Relevance of Bhagavad Gita

10. You are posted as Joint Secretary in the Government of India. Over the last 48 hours, your office receives a surge of complaints from parents of school-going children and women professionals. The complaints state that AI-generated sexually explicit images are being created through prompts on a popular social media platform's integrated AI feature, and then circulated in public threads and group chats. Several victims report that their publicly available photographs have been altered into non-consensual sexualised visuals. A few complaints involve minors.

The platform's India compliance team claims that it is an "intermediary" and cannot pre-screen everything, and strong takedowns and restrictions will reduce user engagement and harm business. Meanwhile, women's groups and the media demand immediate action, while a digital rights collective warns against knee-jerk censorship and insists on transparency and due process in takedown decisions.

You have 72 hours to submit a reasoned, legally sustainable, and ethically defensible response plan that prevents further harm, supports victims, and preserves democratic values and trust in online governance.

Based on the scenario above, answer the following questions:

a) Identify the key stakeholders and the ethical issues involved.
b) What options are available to you as a public authority in the immediate term? Critically evaluate them.
c) Recommend a course of action, with ethical justification and a short-term implementation plan.

For Reference- Artificial Intelligence (AI) & Ethics

11. You are an Indian diplomat serving as the Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations. A major armed conflict has recently erupted between two neighbouring countries in a strategically important region. The war has intensified rapidly, involving missile strikes, drone attacks, and alleged use of AI-assisted military systems. Civilian casualties are rising, millions of people are being displaced, and vital global trade routes passing through the region have been disrupted.

The UN Security Council (UNSC) has called for an emergency meeting to discuss the crisis. However, the council remains divided because some powerful countries support one side due to strategic interests, while others condemn the actions on humanitarian grounds. As a result, meaningful action through the UNSC is stalled.

India faces a complex ethical dilemma. On one hand, India values strategic partnerships, energy security, and economic interests linked with the region. On the other hand, India has historically upheld principles of peace, sovereignty, humanitarian values, and respect for international law.

At the same time, the war has triggered global supply chain disruptions, including shortages of oil and essential commodities affecting developing countries. Human rights organizations are demanding stronger action from the international community to protect civilians and ensure accountability for war crimes.

Based on the scenario above, answer the following questions:

a) Identify the key stakeholders in the above case and explain their interests.
b) What are the ethical dilemmas faced by India in responding to this conflict?
c) Examine the situation using the principles of Just War Theory.
d) As India's representative, what ethical and diplomatic steps would you recommend to balance national interests with humanitarian concerns and global peace?

For Reference- Ethics of War

12. You are the Lead Negotiator for a coalition of developing nations at the COP30 Summit, tasked with finalizing the governance mechanism for a $1.3 trillion global climate fund. Developed nations, acting as the primary financiers, demand voting rights proportional to their funding (mirroring World Bank structures) and veto power over allocations (mirroring the UNSC). They also refuse to integrate the principle of Common But Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR) into the final draft.

Meanwhile, developing nations, already crippled by a share of the $348 trillion global public debt, argue this structure is discriminatory, underrepresents their voices, and prioritizes raw economic power over justice. Concurrently, civil society groups are staging walkouts, highlighting that a prominent developed nation leading the negotiations is immune from accountability despite ongoing, unaddressed human rights violations in West Asia. The summit is deadlocked and on the verge of collapse.

Based on the scenario above, answer the following questions:

(a) Identify the key stakeholders and their underlying interests in this scenario.
(b) Discuss the core ethical issues characterizing this global governance dilemma.
(c) As the Lead Negotiator, outline the ethical framework and specific measures you would propose to resolve the deadlock and ensure the institution serves all equitably.

For Reference- Ethics of Global Governance

13. You are a senior officer in the armed forces overseeing an AI-enabled drone system deployed in a conflict zone. The system identifies a high-value terrorist target in a densely populated urban area and recommends an immediate strike. However, there is a possibility of civilian presence, and the AI system does not fully explain how it assessed the risk.

Based on the scenario above, answer the following questions:

a) What are the key ethical issues involved?
b) Who are the stakeholders in this situation?
c) What options are available to you? Evaluate them.
d) What would be your final course of action? Justify.

For Reference- National Security, AI & Ethics

14. India has recently shown marginal improvement in the World Happiness Report rankings, moving from 118th position in 2025 to 116th in 2026. However, despite being one of the fastest-growing economies in the world, the country continues to lag behind several of its neighbors in terms of overall well-being.

A district magistrate (DM) in a rapidly urbanizing district observes a worrying trend:

- Rising income levels but increasing stress, anxiety, and social isolation among youth
- High usage of social media leading to declining mental health
- Growing inequality between urban elites and rural migrants
- Declining trust in local governance institutions due to perceived corruption

The DM is under pressure from higher authorities to focus primarily on economic indicators such as infrastructure development and investment inflows. However, civil society groups are demanding initiatives aimed at improving mental well-being, social cohesion, and ethical governance.

At the same time, the DM is considering introducing a “District Happiness Initiative” inspired by programs like the Delhi Happiness Curriculum and Bhutan’s Gross National Happiness model. However, there are concerns about feasibility, measurement of outcomes, and administrative burden on already overstretched staff.

Based on the scenario above, answer the following questions:

a) Identify the key ethical issues involved in the above case.
b) Discuss the conflict between economic growth and holistic well-being. Is prioritizing GDP growth ethically justified in this situation?
c) Suggest a balanced course of action for the District Magistrate.

For Reference- Happiness

15. Ravi, a 28-year-old man, has been convicted of the premeditated and brutal murder of a police officer in a high-profile case that received wide media coverage. The trial court has sentenced him to death under the relevant provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita. The family of the slain officer is demanding justice and closure through execution, while multiple human rights organizations are petitioning for the sentence to be commuted to life imprisonment, citing the irreversible nature of the punishment and the global trend toward abolition. Ravi has already spent 3 years on death row during the trial and appeals process, and his mental health has visibly deteriorated. His lawyer argues that the punishment violates his fundamental right to life and dignity.

You are a senior officer in the Ministry of Law and Justice, tasked with advising the government on whether to uphold the sentence or recommend clemency.

Based on the scenario above, answer the following questions:

a) Identify the ethical dilemmas involved in this case.
b) Who are the stakeholders in this case? Briefly outline their perspectives and ethical concerns.
c) If you were in the position to make the final decision, what would your recommendation be and why? Justify your answer using ethical principles, constitutional values, and relevant legal doctrines.
d) Suggest alternative mechanisms for ensuring justice and public confidence without resorting to the death penalty.

For Reference- Ethics of Capital Punishment

16. You have been recently appointed to the position of **Chief Medical Officer** in a remote district. You encounter the case of a woman who had recently been diagnosed with **cervical tumor** and had spent most of her life abused by her drunkard husband. Her tumor has reached **last stage** of its severity causing excruciating pain and helplessness. Even her family is **not very considerate** about her well-being. Under such circumstances, she expressed her desires for **medically assisted dying.** However, the people of the area are highly religious and if a word of such an act spread, then there could be an unrest. The situation has put you into a **difficult position** where on one hand is the suffering of a helpless woman while on the other hand is the issue of civil unrest.

Based on the scenario above, answer the following questions:

a) Mention some arguments for and against subjecting the woman to medically assisted death.
b) What are the key ethical dilemmas involved under such situations?
c) What is the legal status of the right to die with dignity in India? How does the Jain religious practice of Santhara aim to promote this right?

For Reference- Right to Die with Dignity

17. You are currently working as the **CEO** of an e-commerce firm. With the advent of automation, your company has automated a number of operations to **AI-enabled technologies.** This has caused **huge expenditure** on one hand while on the other hand, there are employees whose work has been rendered redundant. The board of the company has therefore decided to go for downsizing causing lay off of around 250 employees. You have been tasked to communicate the news with the selected employees, some of them having a great personal and professional rapport with you.

Based on the scenario above, answer the following questions:

a) Identify the ethical dilemmas faced by you in the above case.
b) What are the key responsibilities of a business towards various stakeholders?
c) Suggest measures that you can recommend to the company's board to be taken before going for downsizing.

For Reference- Ethics of Business Downsizing

18. You are posted as the District Magistrate (DM) in Vanagiri, a heavily forested, tribal-dominated district. The district is rich in mineral resources and biodiversity but ranks very low on standard socio-economic indicators. The indigenous communities here have lived in harmony with the forest for centuries, relying on minor forest produce and traditional agriculture.

To boost the state's GDP and create employment, the State Government has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with a large multinational corporation (MNC) to establish a Mega Mining and Smart-Eco-Tourism Corridor in Vanagiri.

The state machinery argues this top-down, capital-intensive project will bring modern infrastructure, schools, and hospitals (a utilitarian, capitalist approach). However, executing the project requires acquiring thousands of acres of community-owned forest land, displacing several tribal villages.

During your field visits, you observe that previous large-scale displacements in neighboring districts led to the complete destruction of the tribal social fabric. The displaced communities, despite receiving state compensation (a socialist welfare approach), lost their cultural identity, autonomy, and ended up as impoverished daily-wage laborers in urban slums.

The local *Gram Sabhas* (village councils) have passed resolutions against the project, demanding the right to manage their own resources. Meanwhile, the Chief Minister's office is pressuring you to expedite the land acquisition process using the state's eminent domain powers, citing larger national interest and economic growth.

Based on the scenario above, answer the following questions:

a) Identify the stakeholders and the ethical dilemmas involved in this case.
b) Analyze the proposed mega-project through the lens of **Integral Humanism**. How does it conflict with the philosophy's core tenets?
c) As the District Magistrate, propose a practical, alternative course of action for the development of Vanagiri that aligns with the principles of Antyodaya, Decentralization, and Cultural Nationalism.

For Reference- Integral Humanism (Ekatma Manavvad)

19. You are a Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB) and have recently been appointed as the Head of a Special Regulatory Committee. Your mandate is to finalize the **Draft IT Rules 2026** following a recent Supreme Court directive to curb online vulgarity while protecting free speech.

The urgency stems from a massive public controversy surrounding a highly popular digital comedy reality show, **India's Unleashed**. A recent episode featured extreme profanity, explicitly sexual themes, and controversial jokes targeting socio-cultural norms. The episode went viral, drawing millions of views, primarily from teenagers and young adults.

The fallout has sharply divided the nation:

- Civil Society & Parents' Associations are protesting outside the Ministry, demanding an immediate ban on the show and the platform. They argue that such content violates "Constitutional Morality," degrades human dignity and corrupts the youth.
- Content Creators & The Artistic Community have launched a massive counter-campaign online. They argue that humor and obscenity are highly subjective. Citing the Aveek Sarkar (2014) Supreme Court judgment they claim that the community standards of modern digital audiences have evolved. They fear that subjective government censorship will weaponize regulations against artists and destroy the creator economy.
- Digital Platforms (OTT and Social Media) are caught in the middle. They want to maintain advertiser trust and avoid a catastrophic government ban but also do not want to alienate their primary consumer base by acting as moral police.

As the Head of the Committee, you are under immense pressure to take immediate action against the specific show and finalize a broader, long-term ethical framework for the Draft IT Rules 2026.

Based on the scenario above, answer the following questions:

a) Identify the key stakeholders and their core interests in this case.
b) Discuss the central ethical dilemmas involved in regulating obscenity on digital platforms.
c) Critically evaluate the ethical validity of applying J.S. Mill's "Harm Principle" versus Kantian ethics in this scenario.
d) As the Head of the Special Committee, outline your proposed course of action to address the immediate controversy and formulate a long-term regulatory framework.

For Reference- Obscenity on Digital Platforms

20. You are the District Magistrate (DM) of a culturally sensitive district. Recently, a young and energetic Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM), Mr. Rohan, was posted to your district. Mr. Rohan is highly active on social media, particularly Instagram and X (formerly Twitter), where he commands a massive following of over a million citizens.

Initially, his social media presence yielded highly positive results. He effectively used memes and short videos to increase awareness about traffic rules, Swachh Bharat initiatives, and local health camps. His accessibility online led to swift grievance redressals, making him incredibly popular among the youth.

However, over the past few months, the nature of his posts has shifted. His social media team now frequently uploads highly stylized, dramatically edited videos of him conducting surprise raids, confronting local contractors, and walking with a large police entourage. The focus seems to have shifted from the outcome of the administrative work to building a personal "Singham" persona.

Last week, during an anti-encroachment drive in a tense neighborhood, Mr. Rohan live-streamed a heated argument with a local community leader. In the video, he made assertive and slightly aggressive remarks to establish his authority. The video went extremely viral. While his fans lauded his bravery, the video significantly embarrassed the State Government, led to protests by the community leader's supporters, and blurred the lines between his private desire for popularity and his professional duty.

The Chief Secretary has taken note of the incident and has asked you for a detailed report and your proposed course of action.

Based on the scenario above, answer the following questions:

a) Identify the key stakeholders and their respective interests in this case.
b) Discuss the ethical issues and dilemmas arising out of the use of social media by civil servants as highlighted in this scenario.
c) As the District Magistrate, what immediate and long-term actions will you take? Justify your course of action based on the All India Services (Conduct) Rules and ethical guidelines.

For Reference - Social Media and Civil Servants

21. You are the District Magistrate (DM) of a district that has recently witnessed a highly publicized and heinous crime. A local youth leader was brutally murdered, and the incident was captured on CCTV, quickly going viral on social media. The police have apprehended the prime suspect, who belongs to a marginalized community.

Driven by high emotions, misinformation, and sensationalist media coverage, public outrage has reached a boiling point. A massive mob has gathered outside the suspect's residence, demanding instant justice. Local politicians and community leaders are pressuring the district administration to immediately demolish the suspect's house, claiming it was built on encroached municipal land. They argue that this will act as a strong deterrent, pacify the angry public, and prevent widespread riots.

You are fully aware of the recent Supreme Court guidelines strictly prohibiting arbitrary private property demolitions, which mandate prior notice, a personal hearing, and videography of the process. However, the Superintendent of Police (SP) warns that if the mob's demand is not met, the situation could spiral into communal violence, threatening public safety and order.

Based on the scenario above, answer the following questions:

a) Identify the key stakeholders in this case and their respective interests.
b) Discuss the ethical issues and dilemmas involved in yielding to the demand for instant justice.
c) Based on the concepts of justice and the Supreme Court's guidelines, what will be your course of action? Justify your steps.

For Reference - Instant Justice

22. You are the Editor-in-Chief of National Voice, a leading news broadcasting channel owned by a large corporate conglomerate. A tense and volatile hostage situation with communal overtones has just broken out in a major metropolitan city.

Your field reporter has acquired exclusive, unverified smartphone footage of the incident. The footage is highly sensitive. It reveals the private identities of the victims, shows the tactical positions of the police, and contains emotionally charged, subjective commentary that could spark further civic unrest.

The channel's corporate management is aggressively pressuring you to broadcast the footage immediately. They argue that in an era of intense cross-media ownership and market pressure, securing the highest TRP (Television Rating Points) is a critical business imperative. Furthermore, they argue that if the network does not air it, everyday social media users will leak it online anyway.

The Police have explicitly requested a media embargo to ensure the safety of the hostages and the integrity of their operation. Concurrently, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB) recently issued a strict advisory against broadcasting unverified, sensitive content that threatens public order.

You belong to the broadcaster's self-regulatory body. However, the management dismisses this, pointing out that the current self-regulatory penalty for such a violation is a mere ₹1 Lakh fine; considered as a negligible cost of doing business compared to the massive advertising revenue the exclusive broadcast will generate.

Based on the scenario above, answer the following questions:

a) Identify the key stakeholders and their respective interests in this scenario.
b) Discuss the core ethical dilemmas highlighted by this case.
c) What are the options available to you as the Editor-in-Chief? Evaluate the merits and demerits of each.
d) Based on the principles of media ethics and self-regulation, what course of action will you take? Justify your decision.

For Reference - Media Ethics and Self-Regulation

23. You are the District Magistrate (DM) of Dharmagiri, a socially stratified district. At the center of the district lies a historic Temple, managed by a powerful trust dominated by dominant caste leaders. For decades, custom has dictated that marginalized communities are not allowed inside the inner courtyard of the temple.

Recently, a young local social reformer, Anand, has mobilized the marginalized communities. He has launched a massive, peaceful sit-in (Satyagraha) outside the temple gates, demanding unconditional entry for all. Furthermore, Anand is demanding that an unused tract of temple land be handed over to build a vocational school for girls of all castes.

The Temple Trust is furious. The head trustee, while claiming he does not support untouchability in public spaces, argues that the temple must operate according to its interpretation of traditional Varnashrama duties and historical rituals, which they claim mandate separate spaces. They refuse to give up the land for the school, arguing that traditional religious instruction is sufficient.

Tensions are escalating rapidly. Hardline groups on both sides are gathering outside the temple. The dominant caste groups are threatening violence if the protesters cross the temple threshold, while the younger protesters in Anand's camp are growing frustrated and threatening to abandon their non-violent stance to force their way in.

Based on the scenario above, answer the following questions:

a) Identify the primary stakeholders and the ethical dilemmas present in this case.
b) How can the divergent but complementary approaches of Mahatma Gandhi and Sree Narayana Guru be synthesized by you, as an administrator, to resolve this crisis?
c) Outline your immediate and long-term course of action as the District Magistrate.

For Reference - Values of Mahatma Gandhi and Sree Narayan Guru

24. You have been recently appointed as Chief Operating Officer (COO) of a leading textile company in North India. Your main task is to supervise the supply chain department dealing with procurement of raw materials and vendor management. Most of the raw material is sourced from a remote village in Eastern Africa and you recently came across reports about prevalence of extractive and oppressive policies adopted by most of big companies to source their raw materials at a cheaper price. Further investigation leads to the conclusion that your representatives working in that region do indulge in such practices with a view to earn profit and increase personal prospects of promotion. You come from a humble background and have struggled hard to achieve your current professional position. Being made a part of such practices though indirectly has nudged your consciousness and have made you adamant about resolving the issue.

Based on the scenario above, answer the following questions:

a) Mention the suitable course of action that you would take in this situation.
b) What measures are needed to ensure a company **become more conscious and ethical** towards its actions?
c) Discuss the key contrasts between **traditional capitalism and conscious capitalism.**

For Reference- Conscious Capitalism

25. You are posted as the District Magistrate (DM) and District Election Officer (DEO) in a highly sensitive and politically vital district of a State going to the polls. The ruling party has fielded Mr. X, a local strongman with immense money power and several pending criminal cases, including charges of extortion.

To secure his victory, Mr. X's campaign is being heavily funded by a syndicate of local wealthy contractors who anticipate a quid pro quo. Furthermore, during his rallies, Mr. X is promising unaffordable freebies to the electorate. Rather than questioning his criminal background, a large section of the voters seems highly receptive to these promises and are aligning behind him based on caste identity.

Meanwhile, you receive unofficial, subtle instructions from senior officials in the State Government to go easy on enforcing the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) against Mr. X. You are aware that taking strict action might invite vindictive transfers or stall your career progression.

Based on the scenario above, answer the following questions:

a) Identify the key stakeholders and their respective interests in this case.
b) What are the ethical dilemmas and systemic moral issues present in this scenario?
c) As the District Election Officer, what course of action will you take? Justify your steps based on the principles of Constitutional Morality and public trusteeship.

For Reference- Ethics & Politics

26. You are a Joint Secretary in a key government ministry overseeing a critical, high-budget national security infrastructure project. The construction has been outsourced to a prominent private defense contractor. Recently, a senior structural engineer employed by the contractor approached you with confidential documents. These documents reveal that the contractor is using substandard materials to cut costs, which severely compromises the structural integrity of the project and endangers the lives of armed forces personnel.

The engineer initially tried to raise the issue internally with the company's senior management, but was threatened with immediate termination, legal action under strict Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDAs), and potential framing under the Official Secrets Act, 1923, due to the project's classified nature.

Frustrated and fearing for his safety and career, the engineer is now threatening to go to the media if the government does not intervene immediately. However, a public leak could cause widespread panic, compromise national security details regarding the infrastructure's location, and severely embarrass the government.

Based on the scenario above, answer the following questions:

a) Identify the key stakeholders and their underlying interests in this scenario.
b) Discuss the core ethical dilemmas present in this whistleblowing case.
c) As the Joint Secretary, outline a legally and ethically sound course of action to address the structural flaws, handle the whistleblower's threats of media exposure, and protect him from retaliation.

For Reference- Ethics of Whistleblowing

27. You are the Principal Secretary of the Public Works Department (PWD) in a state currently facing severe public backlash. During the onset of the monsoon, a newly inaugurated multi-lane urban flyover collapsed, resulting in several fatalities. Concurrently, the city experienced severe waterlogging because the newly installed drainage pumping stations failed to activate due to rusted and jammed gates.

Preliminary investigations reveal a systemic failure. The contract for the flyover was awarded using the strict **L1** (lowest bidder) method. The winning contractor, known for having strong political backing, heavily compromised on construction material. Furthermore, grassroot-level PWD engineers signed off on the safety and quality audits without conducting physical inspections, demonstrating severe negligence and a recusal of responsibility.

The media is heavily criticizing the administration, stating that the government has fundamentally breached its social contract with the citizens by prioritizing cheap, corrupt infrastructure over human lives. The Chief Minister has summoned you to draft a comprehensive action plan to handle the crisis and reform the department's service delivery mechanism.

Based on the scenario above, answer the following questions:

a) Identify the key stakeholders and their underlying interests in this scenario.
b) Discuss the core ethical issues and administrative failures characterizing this infrastructure governance dilemma.
c) As the Principal Secretary, outline the immediate actions and long-term systemic reforms you would propose to ensure citizen-centric public service delivery.

For Reference- Public Infrastructure and Service Delivery

28. You have recently been appointed as the Director General of the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA). India is aggressively preparing a core group of athletes for the 2036 Olympics, aiming to project national prestige and sporting excellence on the global stage.

Recently, a joint intelligence operation conducted by NADA and the CBI uncovered a massive clandestine network. A prominent pharmaceutical cartel has been exploiting regulatory loopholes to traffic prohibited Performance-Enhancing Drugs (PEDs) by disguising them as legitimate protein supplements.

The investigation reveals a shocking detail: a highly decorated and respected national coach at a premier junior athletics camp is deeply complicit. He has been systematically administering these dangerous metabolic modulators to his junior athletes to maximize their competitive success and secure his own professional reputation. When a few clean athletes raised concerns, they were subtly threatened with expulsion from the camp, coercing them into compromising their autonomy just to remain professionally viable against their chemically enhanced peers.

Taking strict, public action will lead to the suspension of the esteemed coach and potentially several young, promising athletes, bringing severe international disrepute to the Sports Federation right when India is bidding for the 2036 Olympics. However, sweeping the issue under the rug violates the Spirit of Sport and the statutory mandate of NADA.

Based on the scenario above, answer the following questions:

a) Identify the key stakeholders and their respective interests in the given case.
b) Discuss the core ethical issues and moral dilemmas highlighted in this scenario.
c) As the Director General of NADA, what immediate and long-term course of action will you take to resolve this crisis and ensure clean sports?

For Reference- Ethics of Doping in Sports

29. You are a Senior Policy Advisor in the Ministry of Immigration for 'Nordica', a high-income, developed nation. Recently, the government has enacted a stringent "Merit and Utility Framework," designed to aggressively recruit skilled, productive labor while strictly deterring distress migration and refugees.

Simultaneously, a neighboring developing country, 'Tropica', has been hit by severe ecological disasters, creating a massive wave of climate refugees. Thousands of vulnerable people from Tropica are arriving at Nordica’s borders seeking a decent life and basic survival.

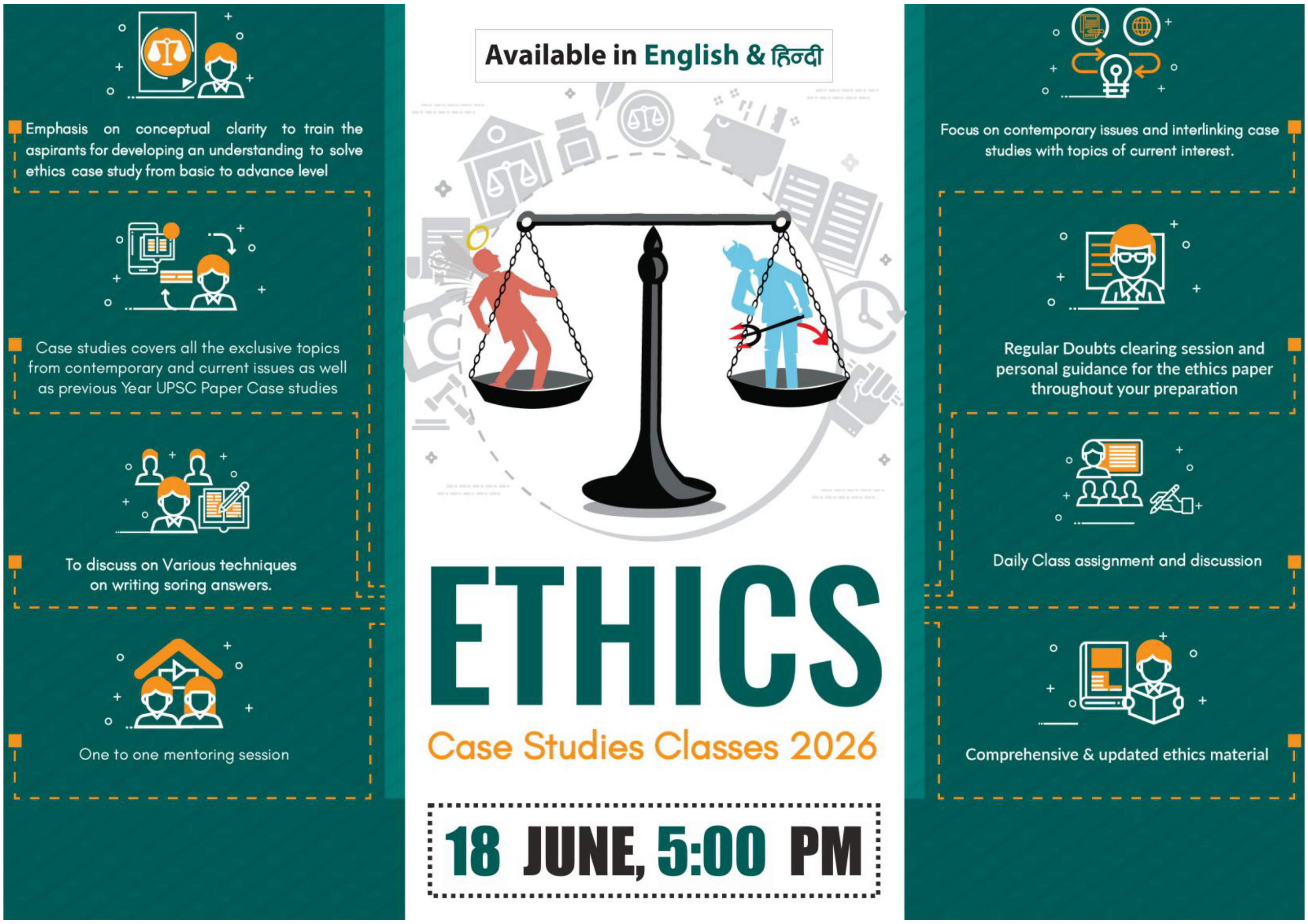
Under the new Temporary Labour Migration Programs (TLMPs), Nordica is readily accepting Tropica’s doctors, engineers, and skilled technicians, but heavily restricting their basic civic rights to prevent long-term settlement. Meanwhile, the distressed climate refugees are being turned away, placed in arbitrary detention, or deported. Humanitarian NGOs (rescuers) attempting to provide aid to these distressed migrants at the border are being threatened with legal action by the government. International organizations like the International Organization for Migration (IOM) have heavily criticized Nordica for violating basic human rights and dignity.

As a civil servant, you are tasked with drafting a comprehensive review of this border policy for the Home Minister, who is facing international pressure but insists on prioritizing the nation's demographic stability and resources.

Based on the scenario above, answer the following questions:

a) Identify the key stakeholders and their competing interests in the above scenario.
b) Discuss the core ethical issues and dilemmas associated with Nordica's cross-border migration policy.
c) Suggest a way forward and potential policy solutions that balance national interests with core ethical principles and human dignity.

For Reference- Ethics of Migration



Available in English & हिन्दी

ETHICS

Case Studies Classes 2026

18 JUNE, 5:00 PM

Emphasis on conceptual clarity to train the aspirants for developing an understanding to solve ethics case study from basic to advance level

Case studies covers all the exclusive topics from contemporary and current issues as well as previous Year UPSC Paper Case studies

To discuss on Various techniques on writing soring answers.

One to one mentoring session

Focus on contemporary issues and interlinking case studies with topics of current interest.

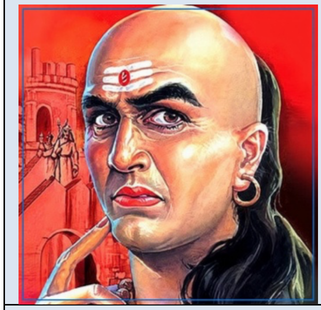
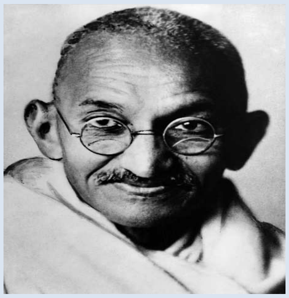
Regular Doubts clearing session and personal guidance for the ethics paper throughout your preparation

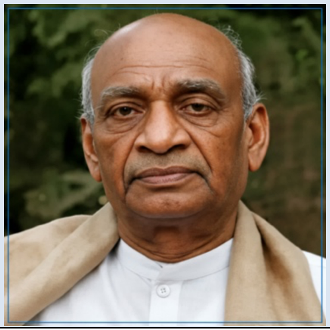
Daily Class assignment and discussion

Comprehensive & updated ethics material

9. APPENDIX

9.1. INDIAN MORAL THINKERS & PHILOSOPHER- ETHICAL IDEAS/VALUES & QUOTES

Personality	Ethical Ideas/Vision	Quotes
Kautilya (Chanakya) 	• **Duty and Righteousness**: A leader should show self-control by abandoning kama (lust), krodha (anger), lobha (greed), mana (vanity), mada (haughtiness), and harsha (overjoy). • **Happiness**: Leader's happiness lies in the welfare of his/her subjects. • **Individual Excellence:** A man is great by deeds, not by birth.	• There is no enemy like infatuation and fire like wrath. • There is no austerity equal to a balanced mind, and there is no happiness equal to contentment; there is no disease like covetousness, and no virtue like mercy.
Thiruvalluvar 	• **Conduct**: Propriety of conduct is the seed of virtue; impropriety will ever cause sorrow. ○ That conduct is virtue which is free from these four things: malice, desire, anger and bitter speech. • **Pure Soul:** Purity of the external body is caused by water and inner purity is caused by veracity.	• It is compassion, the most gracious of virtues, which moves the world. • Falsehood takes the place of truth when it results in unblemished common good.
Mahatma Gandhi 	• **Sarvodaya:** It stands for the progress of the all. • **Trusteeship**: Treats wealth not as a tool for personal greed, but as a societal trust.	• The simplest acts of kindness are by far more powerful than a thousand heads bowing in prayer. • There is enough on this earth for everyone's need but for no one's greed. • The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in service of others. • A man is but a product of his thoughts. What he thinks he becomes
Guru Nanak 	• **Vaand Chhako**: Sharing whatever God has given you with others and helping those who are in need. ○ He encouraged followers to donate at least one-tenth of their earnings for the welfare of other. • **Kirat Karni (Honest and Righteous Labor):** Every individual must earn their livelihood through honest, hard work and dedicated physical	• The greatest comforts and lasting peace are obtained when one eradicates selfishness from within. • If the people use the wealth bestowed on them by God for themselves alone or for treasuring it, it is like a corpse. But if they decide to share it with others, it becomes sacred food.

	labor, treating work as a form of worship.	
Swami Vivekananda 	• **Humanism**: The masses should be our Gods. Service to man is service to God. • **Oneness**: Implies that you are a part of me, and I of you; the recognition, that in hurting you I hurt myself, and in helping you, I help myself.	• Every work has got to pass through hundreds of difficulties before succeeding. Those that persevere will see the light, sooner or later. • Condemn none: if you can stretch out a helping hand, do so. If not, fold your hands, bless your brothers, and let them go their own way.
Jawahar Lal Nehru 	• **Welfare State:** A welfare state ideally provides basic economic security for its citizens by protecting them from market risks associated with unemployment, etc. • **Administration:** Administration should be that it should be oriented to people, should show courtesy to the common man, should give people a sense of participation and should inspire the co-operation in the people.	• Loyal and efficient work in a great cause, even though it may not be immediately recognised, ultimately bears fruit. • Evil unchecked grows; evil tolerated poisons the whole system. • To awaken the people, it is the women who must be awakened. Once she is on the move, the family moves, the village moves, the nation moves.
Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam 	• **Societal Grid**: Comprises of a Knowledge Grid, Health Grid and E-governance grid that feed into the Provision of Urban Amenities to Rural Areas (PURA) Grid. • **Be Humble:** Modesty has, and will remain, a powerful trait because where egoism fails, humbleness conquers.	• If a country is to be corruption free and become a nation of beautiful minds, I strongly feel there are three key societal members who can make a difference. They are the father, the mother and the teacher. • Where there is righteousness in the heart, there is beauty in the character. When there is beauty in the character, there is harmony in the home. When there is harmony in the home, there is order in the nation. When there is order in the nation, there is peace in the world.
Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel 	• He referred to civil services as the **'steel frame' of India,** emphasizing their significance in the administration. • **Inclusivity in decision making process:** E.g., In the integration of the princely states, he encouraged dialogue and negotiation rather than imposing India's will.	• Faith is of no avail in the absence of strength. Faith and strength, both are essential to accomplish any great work. • A war based on Satyagraha is always of two kinds. One is the war we wage against injustice and the other we fight against our own weaknesses.

Mahavir Swami 	**Ahimsa Paramo Dharma**: Non-violence as the supreme moral law; extends to thought, word, and deed **Anekāntavāda (Many-sidedness):** no single perspective holds the whole truth; basis for tolerance, pluralism, and unbiased decision-making. **Pancha Mahavratas**: Ahimsa (Non-violence), Satya (Truthfulness), Asteya (Non-stealing), Brahmacharya (Chastity/Self-control), Aparigraha (Non-attachment).	Do not deprive someone of his livelihood. This is a sinful tendency. Anger begets more anger, and forgiveness and love lead to more forgiveness and love.
Gautama Buddha 	**Middle Path (Majjhimā Paṭipadā):** Ethics lies between extreme indulgence and extreme asceticism; moderation in governance and life. **Impermanence (Anicca):** All conditioned things are in a constant state of flux. Grasping onto temporary things as permanent leads to disappointment.	It is in the nature of things that joy arises in a person free from remorse. Better than a thousand useless words is one useful word, upon hearing which one attains peace.

Copyright © by Vision IAS
All rights are reserved. No part of this document may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior permission of Vision IAS.

VISION IAS
INSPIRING INNOVATION

ANNOUNCING

MAINS EDGE 45

for Mains 2026

Marks Improvement Classes & Mentoring Programme

Smart Answer Writing Intervention

Better Preparation. Better Answers. Better Marks.

45 Days | GS I–IV + Essay | Offline & Online

Highlights

- **90** Workbooks
- 2 Answers Evaluated Daily within 24 Hours
- Weekly Faculty Mentoring for GS and Optional
- Vision Answer Writing Lab | 8 AM – 8 PM
- 4 GS Paper-wise Tests + Essay Guidance
- Progress Tracking + Faculty Notes

*Paper-wise Modules also available

10 June, 11 AM

www.visionias.in/upsc-mains-edge

Scan Qr or Visit

Smriti Ma'am
Subject
Society, Social Justice, Ethics, Essay

Rajesh Sir
Subject
Geography & DM

Jatin Sir
Subject
Polity & Governance, Security, Ethics

Piyush Sir
Subject
Economics, Ethics Case Study

Abhishek Sir
Subject
Environment, S&T

Shivi Ma'am
Subject
History

Kanishk Sir
Subject
International Relations

VISIONIAS
INSPIRING INNOVATION

CONSTITUTION
POLITY
ETHICS
INDIA SINCE INDEPENDENCE

MASTER THE ART of ESSAY WRITING for UPSC CSE MAINS

The Essay paper in UPSC Mains is where ranks are made or lost. Wide score variations among aspirants make it one of the most decisive yet underestimated papers in the entire UPSC journey. The difference between an average essay and a scoring one lies not in what you know but in how you think, structure, and present.

THE ART OF WRITING AN IMPACTFUL ESSAY

Choose Wisely — Select a topic you can explore with depth and balance across multiple dimensions. Avoid topics that seem exciting but lack content depth.

Begin Powerfully — The introduction is your first impression. Anchor it with a compelling quote, anecdote, or thought-provoking contrast that immediately draws the examiner in.

Cracking the Philosophical Essay — Abstract and idea-based topics, increasingly dominant in recent UPSC papers, demand more than facts. They require a clear point of view, conceptual clarity, and the ability to interpret the topic from a broader philosophical, ethical, or human perspective & not merely through social, economic, or political lenses alone.

Build with Depth — The body must weave social, political, economic, ethical, historical, and contemporary perspectives into a coherent, flowing argument. Each paragraph should connect logically to the next, substantiated with facts, data, or relevant examples.

Conclude with Vision — Summarise your central argument, offer a forward-looking insight, and leave a lasting impression. An optimistic, prescriptive close tied back to your introduction creates a complete, coherent essay.

Practice with Feedback — Essay writing sharpens only through regular writing and honest, constructive feedback from mentors and peers.

INTRODUCING

THE ESSAY ENRICHMENT PROGRAM 2026

To help aspirants build this craft systematically, VisionIAS presents the Essay Enrichment Program 2026- a focused, structured program.

Starting
9 June at 5 PM

Guided by experienced VisionIAS faculty

Smriti Shah Ma'am

KEY HIGHLIGHTS:

- 5 live-offline interactive classes
- Covers philosophical and information-based essay types
- 5 mini tests with detailed, personalised feedback
- Faculty led mentoring group sessions
- Supplementary reference material in soft copy
- PYQ analysis to align with UPSC expectations

Your essay. Your rank. Start building it right.

Register for the Program
https://visionias.in/essay/

Download Essay Topper Copies
https://visionias.in/resources/toppers-answer-copy/

10 in top 100

Selections from our

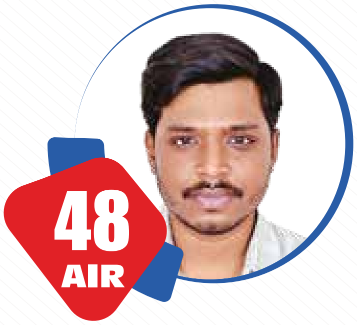
GS Foundation Classroom Course

in CSE 2025

ISHAN BHATNAGAR

ARYAN YADAV

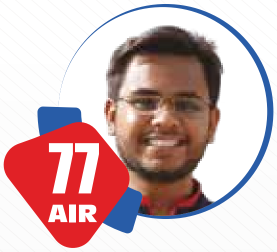
SHAMBHAVI TIWARI



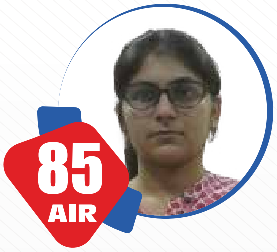
ANIKET RANJAN

ANANYA RANA

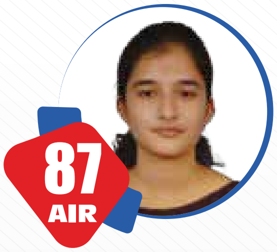
ALASE HRISHIKESH



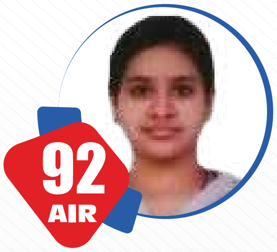
DEVANSH GUPTA



ISHA BARAK



SAYALI BHIKA PAGAR



GARIMA SINGH

Previous Years' GS Foundation Classroom Course Selections

UPSC CSE 2024

HARSHITA GOYAL

DONGRE ARCHIT PARAG

UPSC CSE 2022

WASEEM AHMAD BHAT

UPSC CSE 2021

UTKARSH DWIVEDI

UPSC CSE 2020

SHUBHAM KUMAR

JIVANI KARTIK NAGJIBHAI

✉ enquiry@visionias.in /c/VisionIASdelhi /visionias.upsc /vision _ias VisionIAS_UPSC

DELHI

GMMR ENQUIRY & CLASSROOM CENTER
33, Pusa Road,
Near Karol Bagh Metro Station,
Opposite Pillar No. 113,
Delhi – 110005

MUKHERJEE NAGAR CENTER
Plot No. 857, Ground Floor,
Mukherjee Nagar, Opposite Punjab
& Sindh Bank, Mukherjee Nagar

GTB NAGAR CENTER
Classroom & Enquiry Office,
above Gate No. 2, GTB Nagar
Metro Building, Delhi – 110009

FOR DETAILED ENQUIRY
Please Call:
+91 8468022022,
+91 9019066066

AHMEDABAD | BENGALURU | BHOPAL | CHANDIGARH | DELHI | GUWAHATI | HYDERABAD | JAIPUR | JODHPUR | LUCKNOW | PRAYAGRAJ | PUNE | RANCHI